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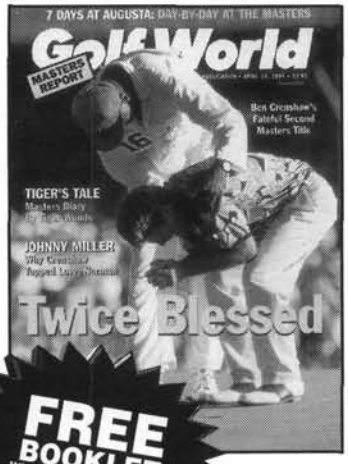

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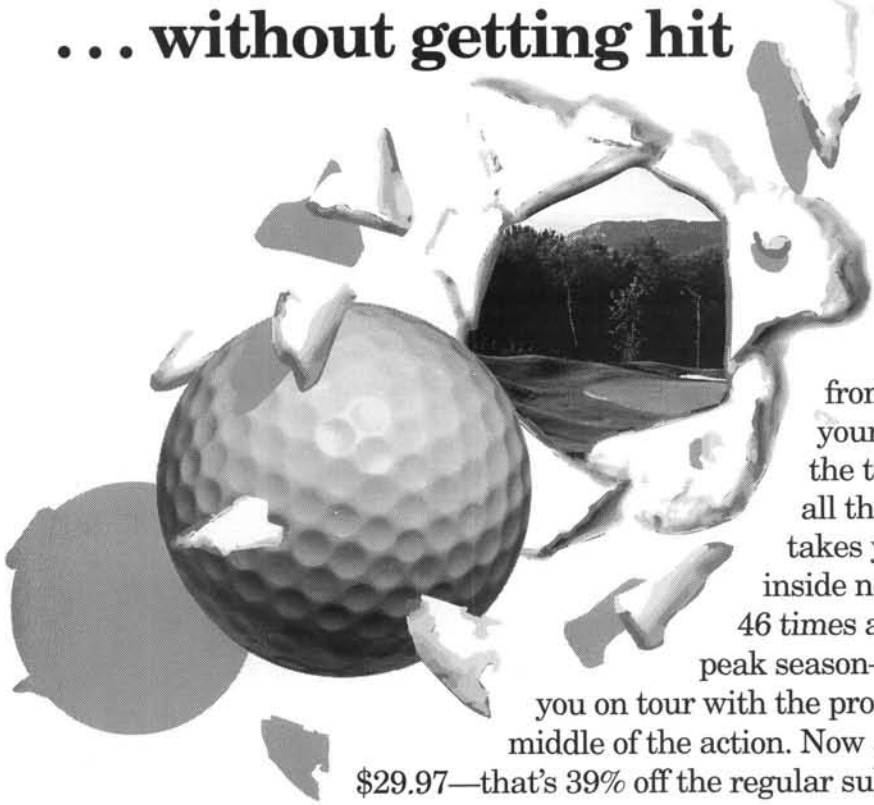

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Chronicles

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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On the Hundredth Meridian

Come on now, Chilton, you can fool the readers of *Chronicles* who have never cut the scent pads off a mule deer buck or pried the "ivories" out of an elk's jaw, but for those of us who have, your hyperbole, especially in your February column ("Hunters and Gatherers"), sometimes reaches the point where a response is required.

I have killed several dozen elk in places ranging from the Bitterroots in Montana to the Uintas and Sunshine Basin in Wyoming and never, ever, did I see or hear of a 700-pound spike bull elk. You didn't have him in your corral for a year and force feed him, did you? Or maybe there was a little Jack Daniels consumed over the carcass. Then there is the little matter of the "gastric juices and contents of the maw." Ain't no such things in the abdominal cavity of an eviscerated animal unless it has been gut shot. Are you telling us in a roundabout way that your marksmanship that day warn't so hot? Or maybe it truly was a case of the Jack Daniels shakes.

Of all the critters I have been lucky enough to kill and dress out, I can't think of an instance where I was "covered in blood, hair, and tissue almost to the shoulders." My hunting partners and I always took pride in not looking like workers in some abattoir after either the gutting out or boning process. But then we saved the Jack Daniels for a bragging session at Zampedries in Fort Bridger.

There are a couple of other parts of your account that deserve scrutiny, but we'll forgive you this time on the grounds of artistic license. Just remember that you ain't the only one living or who has lived in the West who can read an erudite publication like *Chronicles* and understand it.

—*Alton Windsor*
Appleton, WI

Chilton Williamson Replies:

Of course there are no gastric juices in the abdominal cavity of an elk, though there may be bile in Alton Windsor's. After removing the stomach from the very distended paunch, I opened it in an attempt to learn how recently the animal had been feeding.

As for weight, since I do not carry a scales with me into the mountains, my estimates are based on, one, the acknowledged maximum weight of a mature bull (a six-year-old typically exceeds 1,000 pounds); two, a visual comparison with my small Arab mare, whose weight I do know; and three, the opinion of whatever partner I happen to be hunting with. Some years ago, when writing about an elk kill, I took the trouble to consult my copy of *Elk of North America: Ecology and Management*, compiled and edited by Jack Ward Thomas and Dale E. Toweill, for typical weights of elk of both sexes and progressive stages of physical development, without success.

By writing that I was covered in blood and hair to the shoulders, I did not of course mean from boots to shoulders, but from the hands up to the shoulders—an unavoidable result of reaching into the body cavity, grappling with the carcass to shift it on extremely steep and precarious terrain, and carrying the meat to the pack horse. Mangas Coloradas would have understood.

Finally, contrary to Alton Windsor's speculations, I rarely take a drink before sundown, and *never* before handling either guns or horses. Certainly I don't drink when I have a job of writing to do—a rule that Mr. Windsor, to judge from his strangely excited letter, may or may not follow.

On Nationalism

Though current discussions of nationalism are incredibly confused and Wayne Allensworth in "The Nationalist Imperative" (February 1996) does a pretty good job in showing the fragility of the modernist version, what he proposes as the "primordial" counterpart is ridiculous. Let me register a few objections.

The Bowie anecdote is amusing but highly misleading. What follows from Allensworth's claim that "Bowie, like most Americans of the first half of the 19th century, did not think of his Americanness as a mutable quality"? Was Bowie confused, or is "American-

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ness" really a timeless Platonic form? If Allensworth thinks that Americans are defined by "language, culture, and worldview, as well as . . . all those qualities, including the way a people walk and talk, that set them apart from all others," he must have a pretty dim view of his countrymen as mass produced by some assembly line in Thailand. Not only will he have a hard time differentiating his simplistic caricature from a lot of Canadians and Englishmen, but he excludes from his definition the most American of Americans—those rugged individuals who not only walk and talk differently, but have heterogeneous cultures and worldviews not reducible to "most Americans," a category useful only to market researchers seeking ways to sell some other piece of junk.

Identity is always a dynamic category, constantly constituted anew by the concrete social relations within which individuals and groups operate. It freezes into particular constructs only when the concept is mistaken for that which it seeks to capture, thus distorting and falsifying it. There were no "Americans" in the 14th century (the natives never thought of themselves in these terms); there were a few pilgrims and a lot of "Indians" later on, and more English subjects when colonization began in earnest. Americans as we know them did not even come into being with the Declaration of Independence—a document still appealing to abstract universalists—but only with the successful outcome of the Revolution and the eventual ratification of the Constitution. Whatever one may think of "Americanness," it is always an *extremely mutable quality*. We are not carbon copies of our grandparents, and our grandchildren will not be carbon copies of us, in the same way that we are not the same people we were 20 years ago or will be 20 years from now.

To Allensworth's credit, he notices that things do change, since he acknowledges "The America that [Bowie] belonged to was not something that many of us would recognize as such," but there is no inevitability as to how and in which direction. Thus it is disingenuous to recycle the Turner thesis about "the inevitable march of the Americans to unsettled areas." One can imagine a number of possible geopolitical scenarios, which would have led to radically different results. "Inevitability" is always the legitimating form the present imparts on the past to dismiss challenges it can no longer openly confront. Worse yet, Allensworth's "inevitable imperialism" did not "help to fuse the Christian, English-speaking, northern European communities" into a "nation," but *forced* them through a bloody civil war to give up their "cultural particularity"—precisely what they sought to maintain when they originally ran away from a corrupt old continent allowing no freedom to be different and to practice their peculiar brands of Protestantism. Allensworth's "Christian, English-speaking, northern European communities" did not want a "nation." When they had a choice, they formed a "federation," precisely in order to avoid the kind of "Americanization" imposed on them by an increasingly powerful central government from the Civil War to the present. Unfortunately, the change in this case was not always an improvement: the nation has meant homogenization, loss of freedom and self-determination, as well as the eradication of that individualism and self-sufficiency which is still in some sense the most distinguishing American ideal.

When Allensworth shifts from the anecdotal to the theoretical mode, the quality of his account deteriorates. He wants to define nations as "large groups of people who are conscious of such bond," i.e., family, clan, and tribal ties, to a larger group—something that allegedly existed with the "ancient Egyptians, Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans," who allegedly all possessed "a sense of identity, uniqueness, and destiny." This he sees as a "national extension of kinship."

The main problem with this is that these kinds of "national" bonds are always externally imposed. The "natural" thing is for those small communities to *federate* into larger units, while retaining their cultural particularity. Nations, as we know them, homogenize all units belonging to them and flatten all culture into the national standard—something usually imposed by an intellectual elite from the center outward. It does not help Allensworth's case to fudge by throwing in the ancients, e.g., the Romans. Usually, these were *empires* and not nations, i.e., aggregations of smaller communities usually subjugated by force and only subsequently integrated, never altogether successfully.

If Allensworth thinks that all was "hunky-dory" within those empires and that there were some transcendental bonds, then he better guess again. The Roman Empire was never a nation and, with the exception of the patricians living in the seven hills in the center, the rest of the subjects were never altogether happy with the arrangements—particularly when it came to paying taxes and putting up manpower to fight wars in faraway lands. Roman law did become the *lingua franca* of all Europe, but that hardly constitutes a European "nation."

To shift a little closer to the present, it is not immediately obvious that the residents of Buffalo, New York—probably a bunch of ethnic mongrels with no clear ancestral lineage—share more with people in San Diego or Miami than with their friends and relatives in Toronto or Hamilton on the other side of the border. Anyway, it is clear that Southerners have never been very fond of the kind of Yankee ties and bonds imposed on them since the last century. The same can be said of Canadians from Newfoundland and their conationals in Alberta, the Prussians and the Bavarians in Germany, Piedmontese and Sicilians in Italy, etc.

In a nutshell, ethnonationalism is utter nonsense. Ethnicity itself is nothing but the cultural specificity that obtains as a result of people coexisting within a particular territory and sharing common problems. It is always being reconstituted, even in the most "primordial" communities where often the assimilated outsiders end up taking the name of the place from which they originally came. It has *nothing* to do with race or biology and *everything* to do with territory and the concrete institutional order that has developed over time in the form of traditions, customs, cuisine, festivals, dialects, etc. There is no need to trace ancestral relations back to Adam and Eve to constitute a community. When all is said and done, ethnonationalism is but a badly recycled version of that old-fashioned racism according to which some groups (usually all others but one's own) are deemed inferior and, consequently, candidates for domination, exploitation, or in the case of Nazi Germany, scapegoating.

Allensworth's archaic approach is, however, consistent, even in its recycling of crypto-Heideggerian ravings against technology and industrialism as the *fons et origo malorum*. He longs for an agrarian, preindustrial, and precapitalist society which he sees as the only alternative to the present state of degeneracy. Yet he lacks the imagination to prefigure a postmodern, truly federal system with-

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out nations and managerial elites—a world where the information highway is not full of pornographic hitchhikers and commercial shysters but is a mode of relating autonomous communities with their culture intact and their traditions thriving. Hatred of the present and of the human degradation it has brought about need not lead to inventing a golden past that never was and whose fraudulence ultimately ends up relegitimating that very same present it originally sought to indict. Rather, it should translate into concrete efforts to integrate new and not-so-new developments such as capitalism, industrialism, and technology within traditional frameworks which are always much richer and more flexible than most of their alleged defenders assume.

—Paul Piccone
Editor, Telos: A Journal
of Critical Thought
New York, NY

Wayne Allensworth Replies:

If Mr. Piccone had not been so busy trying to sound clever while scoring points against what he thought I said, he might have gone back and read the piece a little more carefully. For Piccone makes some of the same terminological errors that Connor is critical of in his book. Mr. Piccone uses the term "nation" in the same way that Connor's "modernists" do: the "nation" is a centralized state, Connor's "integrated state." I agree with Mr. Piccone when he says that men of Bowie's kind had no use for the integrated state, preferring a looser federation that allowed for regional peculiarities. I was *criticizing* the modernist equation ("nation" equals "state"; membership in the "nation" is a matter of filling out the correct bureaucratic forms), and the point I made in writing that Bowie's Americanness was immutable (for him, at least) is that neither he nor many of his contemporaries saw their identity as Americans as tied to the state, *any* state, and that it had a more solid center to it than "coexisting within a particular territory" or "sharing common problems." Just why did the people of Cincinnati support the Texas rebellion? Does Mr. Piccone really think the New Orleans Grays or the Kentuckians and Tennesseans who fought on the rebel side of the conflict would have done so if the rebels *had not* been people who walked and talked like them? They did not share the immediate problems of the rebels, but they fought with them because the rebels were the *American* side of the conflict; they were helping fellow *Americans* in trouble.

I also agree that identity is a "dynamic" category. I said as much in the article, when I pointed out that an American identity was formed by common experiences and shared perspectives (the experience of the Indian wars, for instance), something that pulled the diverse "Christian, English speaking, northern European communities" together, but that did not necessarily homogenize them. I pointed out that Bowie was representative of a particular type—not of all Americans of the era. That is, in part, what I had in mind when I wrote that the "conservative's main concern is not simply the physical survival of his people, but *their survival as what?*" The modern state does "flatten all culture into the national standard" as Mr. Piccone points out, something I detest as well, but it is Mr. Piccone who lacks imagination on this score. How are smaller communities to federate into larger units "while retaining their cultural peculiarity" in an era of mass communication, mass production, air travel, and bureaucratic social organization? That is a nut conservatives and libertarians have failed to crack. I wish I had an alternative—we can start with attacking big government, but where do we go from there? I hope Mr. Piccone is right about the information highway, but I have my doubts. Not all of us will be able to make a living at a computer keyboard, and I wonder if traditional culture can long survive disconnection from nature.

I wrote (more than once) that the sense of national solidarity is "largely an internalized psychological state" among people who *imagine* themselves to be "ancestrally related." This kinship element explains the strength and resilience of the national bond, which so many observers, including Mr. Piccone, dismiss at their (and our) peril. Human beings need a sense of communal belonging in order to develop normally, and ethnocentrism, tribalism, nationalism, or whatever you wish to call it, is an important and necessary ingredient of community. If we are going to revitalize America in the next century, we had better get used to recognizing this truth, as inconvenient as it is. Connor's theories are for serious people who are concerned with getting at the truth, not with the way we might like things to be, and they should be criticized on their own terms. The cheap "racism" accusation is unbecoming a man like Mr. Piccone, who is supposedly committed to "critical thought."

On Hollywood and the Media

Although generally sympathetic to Philip Jenkins's concerns about the burgeoning giants of the "media/entertainment" complex, I found the closing paragraphs of his February essay, "The Matter of Money," to be rather confused. Is it a desire for *money* that has inspired the producers of top-20 sitcoms to introduce such themes as homosexuality and even homosexual "marriage" on already successful prime-time programs? Mr. Jenkins is, in fact, worried that the new conglomerates will *avoid* dealing with homosexuality and other "controversial" matters which are "politically incorrect." But actually homosexuality has become the cause *du jour* both in academia and in the entertainment industry—where no self-respecting actor will appear at an award show without wearing the symbolic red ribbon.

Actually, Mr. Jenkins's quasi-Marxoid economic determinism has blinded him to a major factor in the motivation of entertainment moguls, one analyzed and fully exposed by Michael Medved in *Hollywood vs. America.* That factor is ideological: a twisted moral passion to use the media to subvert traditional concepts of virtue and replace them with a radical social agenda.

—Jonathan Chaves
The George Washington University
Washington, D.C.

On Public Opinion Polls

As a lifelong market researcher, I couldn't agree more with Robert Weissberg's exposé of the flaws of political polling ("Shadowmetrics," February 1996). But Professor Weissberg did not

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include a list of embarrassing questions with which to attack spurious data, and so here it is:

1. Who is included in the intended target population? Age, sex, ethnic group, voting status, geography, etc.

2. How was the sample drawn? Phone books, membership lists, random numbers, etc.

3. What was the connect rate? The percentage of calls reaching a human.

4. What was the refusal rate? The percentage of humans refusing to answer.

5. What was the completion rate? The percentage of respondents who endured the (often overly long) interview all the way to the end.

If the answers to the previous three questions were 33, 20, and 75, for example, the end result is a survey based on the answers of only two out of every ten people on the original list.

6. What were the call back instructions to the interviewers? A properly designed study will include instructions to call back at least once, better twice, to reach the respondents originally targeted. Prompt substitution of "alternates" is a good way to lose control over the sample design.

7. Were any screening questions included, and if so, what were they? Screening questions will help determine whether the person reached actually belongs in the sample, and if appropriate, whether he or she has any knowledge of the subject of the interview. Examples: When did you last vote, if ever? What was your exposure to print and electronic media? What was your experience with a certain program/service/product?

8. How was the interview staff trained and supervised? At a minimum, the field supervisor should review the interview guide with the staff, or the electronic equivalent should take place. The interviewers must be supervised to avoid phantom interviews.

9. During what hours of the day or days of the week was the bulk of the data collected? If most of the completed calls were made during the day, the sample is heavily loaded with retired people, nonemployed mothers with babies, and people on welfare and excludes the critically important group of wage earners.

10. What, if anything, is done with comments outside the script?

11. Was the script debugged (field tested) before the project was started? On how many targets?

12. What were the interviewers' instructions once he or she was connected to the target phone number? Ask for the head of household, the man, the woman, verify whether the respondent lives there or is merely answering the phone, etc.

13. Ask for a copy of the interview script. Most polling organizations will refuse, as the script is a made-to-order guide for finding flaws in the research design, the findings, or both.

—Job Luning Prak
Tucson, AZ

On Eastern Europe

Thomas Molnar ("Left and Right in Eastern Europe," March 1996) should be commended for pointing out the "scandalous impunity" with which communist criminals escaped punishment for their atrocities in Central and Eastern Europe. The communist nomenclaturas, supported by the West, acquired a thin veneer of "democracy," and continue to rule. Naturally, they would not indict themselves for their past crimes. Therefore, no "Nuremberg" trials, regardless how the victims felt.

But for somebody presumed familiar with European history, Molnar commits some incredible blunders. He writes of the division of Europe "effected by the Turkish occupation before and after the year 1500," and asserts: "The separation was reinforced . . . along *the same line* drawn at Yalta. For example, Vienna, which the Turks were unable to take then, remained also outside the Soviet orbit" (emphasis mine).

When Vienna repelled the Turkish attack with the help of Polish and Czech soldiers [editors' note: King John Sobieski of Poland broke the siege and rescued the city] it also blocked any further Turkish expansion to the Northwest into the Czech kingdom and Poland. These lands *continued to be a part of the West*, cultivating (in Molnar's words) their "art, science, institutions, and history." Molnar's assertion that the line drawn at Yalta was "the same" as the 16th-century division imposed by the Turkish raids is ridiculous. Vienna did remain free then, but so did Prague and Kraków. (The Turks were forced to give up even occupied Hungary by 1699.) Knowingly or unknowingly, Molnar is whitewashing the Yalta betrayal of *a part of the West*. The effort to shove nations like the Czechs and Poles into "Eastern" Europe is one of the war crimes of World War II.

Molnar is no less hazy about the terms "left" and "right." He lumps "liberals" (presumably in the American sense) with the "conservatives" as "the right." If there is a pragmatic definition of those terms, established by observed practice, it is this: the left promotes the rule of a small self-appointed nomenclatura, allegedly on behalf of "the people," who are in fact powerless. The right promotes the rights of the individual citizen (limited only by the rights of others), the rule with consent of the governed, and the primacy of law. Accordingly, American liberals are leftists, as were Hitler's Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei and Mussolini's fascists. Calling the Nazis, the fascists, and the Russian "conservatives" (translation: fossil archcommunists) "the extreme right" is a transparent leftist trick: it protects them from having the reputation of their totalitarian soulmates rub off on them, and it gives them a chance to pin the label of "fascist extremists" on their truly rightist democratic opponents.

Moreover, I would not be too sure that the "rightist protest over this scandalous impunity" (failure to prosecute the communist atrocities) "died out." It survives underground. It survives among the exiles. The individual criminals might escape by dying out. But as shown in former Yugoslavia, nations have long memories. I would not be surprised if a nation betrayed by its friends and allies at Munich, betrayed at Yalta, betrayed in 1948, betrayed in 1968, and betrayed again in 1989-90, refused to trust—and aid—its "friends" in the next European crisis.

—K.A. Skála
Denver, CO

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HATE CRIMES—What are they? In Newport, Rhode Island, a mixed-race couple complained that threats from their white neighbors had driven them from their home. Generous contributions from strangers helped the family to find a new place and to pay the rent. Local police, however, were suspicious from the first and eventually charged Tisha Anderson with plotting her own hate crime. On February 7, Miss Anderson pleaded no contest to charges of filing false police reports. Even if the threats had been genuine, they would have been only words, but if the hate-speech perpetrators had been found, there would have been a public inquisition on the level of the Salem Witch Trials.

At virtually the same time the Newport farce was drawing to a close, a grimmer drama was being played out in Addison, Illinois, where a pregnant Debra Evans was brutally murdered along with her ten-year-old daughter, Samantha. The killers slashed open Miss Evans' belly and removed the baby alive. The next day, her seven-year-old son Joshua was killed, but they spared the life of another child in the house. Charged in the slaying were neighbor Jacqueline Annette Williams, her boyfriend Fedell Caffey, and her cousin Laverne Ward.

According to police, Jacqueline Williams was unable to have children and plotted the murder with her boyfriend. She apparently had been feigning pregnancy for some time in order to make the arrival of a newborn more plausible. In the most bizarre twist of the case, Laverne Ward claims to be the father of Evans' surviving children and is claiming custody. The fact that is hardly mentioned in any of the reports is the race of the victims and the "alleged perpetrators": Debra Evans and her two murdered children were white; Jacqueline Williams and her friends are black; the two surviving children are mulatto. So there it is in black and white.

One of the worst aspects of this case has been the media coverage. Unless you were listening to talk radio, you would have needed the skills of a Sherlock Holmes to figure out the race of the victims and killers. But the press routinely refuses to identify the race of criminals, although in some parts of the country, it is an easy trick to figure it out: outside the South, any criminal with an Anglo surname is probably black. American citizens have a right to know the facts of a criminal case, if only because they, ultimately, have a voice in deciding criminal justice policies. Unfortunately, the American media are more interested in condemning white racism than in reporting the facts.

In Boston, a black couple in an automobile grew impatient with the slow progress of pedestrians leaving a public New Year's Eve celebration. The boyfriend, driving without benefit of a license, simply gunned the engine and plowed through the crowd, injuring 21 people. The couple is claiming they acted in self-defense in reaction to threats from white pedestrians, but the policeman on the scene commented: "He said he was going to drive over those people, and that's exactly what he did." Nonetheless, newspapers dutifully reported the "threats," as if an insult justified attempted homicide. Last year, when Michael Westerman was murdered by a group of black toughs who objected to the Confederate Flag on his truck, the immediate press response was to condemn the atmosphere of white bigotry that had inspired the crime, and the FBI was called in to investigate not the murder but alleged incidents of cross-burning.

At the beginning of the Bosnian conflict, I asked a Serb fighter what it was like, and he replied: this is warfare at the biological level. What he meant was sociobiological warfare, as when a male cat kills a mother cat's litter and almost immediately impregnates her with his own genetic inheritance.

Unfortunately, in teaching black Americans to demonize whites, black nationalists—and their friends in the press—are working to bring about another Bosnia. Even bitter enemies sometimes recognize the humanity of their opponents, but the poisonous race hatred that is being taught to blacks is beginning to blind some of them to the humanity of their "white oppressors." They look at a child and see only the white skin that gives them a license to kill.

—Thomas Fleming

THE PARTIAL BIRTH abortion of late-term fetuses is the most odious form of abortion, known as "dilatation and extraction" (D & X). The procedure, fully and gruesomely described in the major media and on the floor of Congress earlier this year, when President Clinton vetoed the bill that would have banned D & X, involves partially removing a late fetus from the womb, feet first, then pausing to insert a canula into the skull in order to suck out the brain, permitting the skull to collapse and the now-dead baby to be extracted with minimal damage to the woman's cervix. This procedure, so gruesome that European observers refuse to believe that it is actually performed, might seem to be one that abortion promoters as well as opponents might agree to eliminate.

But to our surprise, the National Organization for Women, Congresswoman Patricia Schroeder, and even President Clinton himself, among many others, have rallied to defend this procedure, which is never performed except late in pregnancy. A woman who had such an abortion in the ninth month of pregnancy, Vikki Stella, appeared with NOW in Washington to argue that the procedure must be permitted. Mrs. Stella knew that she was expecting a boy and had named him Anthony, but when her doctor told her that he would have a cleft palate and be a dwarf, she decided that she could not cope and resorted to the D & X procedure. She had the baby—she frequently used the term—cremated, and keeps the ashes in her home. If her two daughters ask, "What is that?" she can reply, "That was your brother Anthony. He was going to be misshapen, so a nice doctor killed him for me." President Clinton threatened to veto the measure as "unconstitutional"—surely one of the most flexible words in the political vocabulary. The Senate now has passed a slightly amended bill. The procedure, as its advocates repeatedly tell us, is rare—but not so rare, on an annual basis, as the number of people killed by terrorist bombs each year.

Columnist Ellen Goodman, in whose eyes abortion of every kind appears to be a sacred rite essential for a woman to be fully human, objects that the banning of such abortions is only the first step toward banning abortion altogether. Although that is a desirable goal in the eyes of many of us, to assert that one dare not ban D & X abortions because it will lead to the prohibition of all abortions makes

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no more sense than to argue that the abolition of the gruesome medieval punishment of hanging, drawing, and quartering would inevitably lead to the abolition of punishment altogether.

Mrs. Goodman argues that it is not the business of Congress to ban any "medical procedure." In addition to being an example of immoral extremism, her contention also illustrates the technique of giving an abomination a nice name and then approving it. Dr. Jack Kevorkian wants suicide and his industrious collaboration in it to be accepted as a medical procedure: adding the words "physician assisted" apparently makes suicide acceptable. Both Dr. Kevorkian and his attorney, Geoffrey Feiger, frequently lash out at those opponents who happen to have religious reasons, as though having religious convictions means instant disqualification for public debate.

Is there any procedure so gruesome that abortion advocates will relinquish it, that senators can identify it as evil without expert medical advice, or that President Clinton will not protect it by the use of his veto power? Apparently not. Those who call the Christian Coalition and its allies "extremists" should, if they want to find real extremism, look at those who defend "partial birth abortions" as just another "procedure."

—Harold O.J. Brown

HILLARY CLINTON probably deserves all of the hostile criticism she has received for her silly new book, *It Takes a Village*. Her ghostwriter, Barbara Feinman, has the prose style of Barney the dinosaur, and, as reviewer after reviewer has noted, much of the book consists of dumbed-down versions of all the nanny-state policy proposals—socialized medicine, home visits from "child-care professionals," midnight basketball—which have so endeared the Clintons to social workers.

But while most of the popular scorn has targeted Hillary's propaganda for the Democratic Party, her personal childrearing philosophy has either gone unnoticed, or worse, passed muster, even on the right. In this age of contraception, we can set aside our doubts about "parenting" tips from a parent who has limited herself to one child, but the First Lady's zaniest opinions on children have escaped criticism, precisely because they are indistinguishable from the advice that appears in the "parenting" manuals and newspaper columns that teach late 20th-century parents how to rear their children. Lengthy passages are lifted from "parenting" guru T. Berry Brazelton, and her endorsement of "letting [children] choose for themselves" as the proper path to "self-disciplined autonomy" bears striking resemblance to the advice of another famous childrearing expert who wrote recently in his newspaper column that "self-esteem" flourishes in the "most democratic" families.

"Parenting" is big book business these days, even as marital fertility in America is at an all-time low. The First Lady's only departure from the conventional wisdom is her candor in expressing the operating principle that binds the childrearing experts on the left and on the right: "There is no such thing as other people's children." Yet only people who do not have enough children of their own have time to concern themselves with the "parenting" skills of strangers. Never in history have human beings been surrounded by more institutions—public and private—to supervise the rearing of so few children, and never has the job been performed so poorly.

For all of the attention we are giving to childrearing, an increasing number of children are growing up miscreants. The First Lady may argue that there is no such thing as other people's children, but the public parks to which I take my children are frequented by other people's rotten children. The younger ones are pushy and selfish, and the older—though not much older—are sloppy and foul-mouthed.

There is no time to fret over the arrested development of the children of strangers because the task of rearing two boys occupies the energies of two adults, with no time left over for: "Videos with scenes of commonsense baby care—how to burp an infant, what to do when soap gets in his eyes, how to make a baby with an earache comfortable" playing continuously "anywhere people gather and have to wait." My wife is too busy making dinner to evaluate the theory that "a sensible meat serving . . . is about the size of a deck of cards." Even if I listened to the radio—known as "the electronic village"—I might not appreciate the "child-care tips" Hillary wants inserted in "the middle of the Top Ten countdown."

Even in a world of so few children we ought not require experts—public or private—to tell us what is self-evident. When we need a baby-grooming video at the airport to tell us how to deal with a child who gets shampoo in his eyes, we are really in trouble. Human nature, however, ought to prevent such a day from ever coming. While the saints in our midst might truly cherish those magic moments—of the 3:00 A.M. feedings—the rest of us, fretting about the trials that tomorrow promises, will continue to get up for our screaming children so that we can all get back to sleep.

If you are searching for solid childrearing advice, and your own common sense and parents have abandoned you, you could do worse than consult some of the aphorisms that never would have become trite if they were not true: little reflections on such things as the consequences of sparing the rod overmuch and the benefits of seeing, not hearing, children.

Should you require more detailed guidance, one reliable rule of thumb would be, "the older, the better." Plutarch's *De Liberis Educandis* is safe; my favorite is St. John Chrysostom's "Address on Vainglory and the Right Way for Parents to Bring Up Their Children." A sample: "When he is ten or eight or even younger, let him hear in full detail the story of the flood, the destruction of Sodom, the descent into Egypt—whatever stories are full of divine punishment." Doubtless the good bishop felt such stories would do wonders for the child's self-esteem.

—Christopher Check

OBITER DICTA: *Right Now!*, the quarterly journal on politics and culture published by Derrick Turner in London, now has an office in the United States. For a one-year subscription, send $15 to *Right Now!*, 333 East Maple Ave., Suite 225, Vienna, VA 22180. A sample copy may be purchased for $5.

* * *

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Igor Kopelnitsky

Man, Man, and Again Man

by Thomas Fleming

"Qualis artifex pereo"
—Nero

I cannot remember a time when I was not what would be called an environmentalist. I spent much of my childhood on an earth unconstricted by concrete streets and unburdened by the weight of buildings. I was never happier than when I was out fishing with my father or picking berries with my sister, or helping friends with their traps. Until we moved near Charleston, I had never seen a city that did not deface the landscape, and to this day I prefer, when I am traveling, to spend my time in the countryside.

This is not to say that I am necessarily a misanthropist, at least not for this reason. Actual wilderness is something to reserve for rare occasions: the experience of wilderness is as brutal and depersonalizing as falling in love, while our everyday contacts with the cultivated parts of the natural world seem more like marriage or friendship. Robinson Jeffers sometimes wrote as if he preferred hawks to human beings, and when he complained of all the people moving to Big Sur, his wife suggested that they move to Alaska. Jeffers replied that landscape, untouched by humanity, was without interest.

There are places in the world where man, working over the generations, has sculpted landscapes that serve his needs, his desperate need for beauty as well as his need for food. There are parts of Umbria and Southern England that prove that Eden, where the first man and woman were put "to dress it and to keep it" in perfect happiness, is no myth, or rather one of those myths that define us as human beings. The remarkable Frederick Turner once explained to me that tourist traps like Stresa and the Borromean Islands, with their carefully cultivated air of antique fishing villages, have acquired a secondary kind of naturalness as the generations go by. If it is true that man's nature is art, then it is hardly worth the effort to distinguish between them. The most beautiful landscapes are the points at which man, through his art, has expressed the purpose for which he was put here: "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it."

The cultivation of gardens—the hedging and terracing, the walling and diking—can go on even in cities. I know a philosopher in Atlanta who devotes his free time to building stone walls that turn the slopes of his "undesirable" backyard into a Tuscan half-acre of garden. London, despite the hideousness of the housing flats and the tedium of its mock-Manhattan skyscrapers, is still a city of parks and gardens, where a bit of the countryside can be enclosed within the iron gates of a quiet square. Ancient cities, no matter how great, were never completely detached from the countryside, and Babylon was famous for its gardens. Babylon also (so it would seem) inspired

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the fable of the Tower of Babel, the permanent warning against the presumption and follies of men who turn from landscape gardening to high-rise construction "whose top may reach to heaven." Not content with subduing the earth, with shaping and "dressing" it, "now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." The punishment, then and now, is confusion, not merely in the sense that we do not understand each other, but in the deeper sense that we do not understand ourselves.

Sometimes it takes a city to teach us about the country—it is no accident, for example, that pastoral poetry is cultivated by people undergoing urbanization. I was living in San Francisco in 1969 and spent much of my time wandering about on the cliffs by the Legion of Honor Museum, imagining the voices of the seals who were no longer there. Downtown I went to see a new cathedral—all glass and concrete—and it was there that I realized, nonbeliever though I was, that man cannot properly express any of his aspirations except in natural materials that reflect his landscape.

I was not, I hope, falling into the foolish idiom of art theorists like Vincent Scully who reduce architecture to something like an excretion of local landscape, because some of our landscape we have been carrying around with us since Eden. As bizarre as English-style Greek-revival architecture might seem on the banks of the Mississippi, both England and Greece were part of the mental universe of Southern planters. But man-made materials—ferro-concrete, glass, plastic—are mere reflections of our own imaginations, and the more "imaginative" the material, the less we are constrained by the physical and mathematical laws that determine our sense of beauty (as explained in *On Growth and Form* by the classically trained biologist D'Arcy Thompson).

Things made from plastics can reflect only our self-conceit, our vain desire to liberate ourselves from the laws of our own nature, including the law of death. It is no accident that the plastics industry is the faithful servant of American consumption, the force that subverts all traditions—moral and political, as well as aesthetic—in its drive to reconnect humanity—divided since Babel—in one universal libido. This is the only world order that really counts, and the good news is that we are already choking to death like the greedy Viking in the folktale.

The last time I allowed myself to think of these things, I was in Genoa, a monument to the follies and corruption of mismanagement. The ancient alleys, haunted by Tunisian drug dealers, stink of things worse than the merely human excretions they have been accumulating for centuries. The polluted harbor is virtually empty of ships, because of the high prices imposed by labor unions with the connivance of government. Yet all around are the relics of wealth and beauty from the time when Genoa was a proud mercantile capital of the Mediterranean, rivaled only by Venice. Columbus came from Genoa and must have imparted some of its pride and some of its love of wealth to the New World. In our beginning is our end—only we shall leave behind so much less that is worth preserving.

In Genoa I spent several hours talking with Pier Luigi Zampetti, some of whose political views I have previously discussed. His book *La Sfida Del Duemila* (Rusconi, 1988) takes up the crisis of democracy—and Zampetti is a highly original advocate of participatory democracy—but from a distinctly moral point of view that includes the great question of the environment.

For Zampetti, materialism is the obvious culprit, responsible for our spiritual malaise as well as environmental catastrophe, and although he is staunchly antisocialist, he sees capitalism as the primary vector of the disease:

> Materialism has become the dominant philosophy both in the West and in the East. . . . Capitalism, as we know, is the economic system of the entire contemporary world. East and West are worlds bound by capitalistic systems, even if of different types. But, how is man considered in these systems? Can he express himself, his free and responsible choices; in other words is he considered a person? Not even in a dream.

We are no longer properly "persons" because Cartesian dualism has led us to consider ourselves objectively. "Man is considered an object, not as the subject of the system of economic production" to the extent that others make his economic (and social) decisions for him. If we are no longer persons, we have sunk to the level of the mere individuals so dear to the hearts (if it is fair to say that they have hearts) of economists:

> The consideration of man as object instead of subject . . . means the exclusion of the conception of man as a being constituted by the integration of the spiritual force and the material or bodily force. We call "the individual" the man in whom spirit and matter are separated. We call "person" the man in whom the two forces are integrated. Man can be considered an object only in the first case, not in the second.

Capitalism *per se* is not evil, he says, but it provides the conditions that facilitate the descent from person to individual:

> Individualism does not necessarily lead to the predominance of matter, in relations between the world of the spirit and the world of matter. In early capitalism, the phenomenon was not yet manifested, or if it was, it came about in an indirect manner. The economy was only a part of society, and in this phase man was treated only occasionally as object. In any case, the exercise of liberty was always possible, and therefore choices in many sectors of the economic world, especially in the world of consumption based on the law of supply and demand. For such reasons, in the individualistic conception the spiritual force and the material coexisted, and one could not speak of a primacy of the second over the first. Capitalism, therefore, as an historical phenomenon, did not have to issue, necessarily, in a materialistic conception of life . . . [but] the event was possible and could not be excluded. And this possibility was owing to the individualistic and no longer personalist conception of modern thought.

This possibility was not arrived at until the last phase of capitalism, which he calls *consumismo*, a term with a broader significance than the American term "consumerism," which means little more than "shop 'til you drop." *Consumismo*, on the other hand, implies an entire way of life defined by getting and spending as the ultimate activities. The advertising jingle that comes closest is a billboard I once saw: "Shop like you

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mean it."

Materialism and consumism retard the development of the human person. Just as we have been taught to regard nature as something "other" and objective, we have given ourselves the same treatment:

> The drama of man today lies in this: with his degradation from subject to object, the objectivity of man gets made equivalent to the objectivity of nature. Man is not in a position to exercise his own spiritual capacities that elevate him above nature. . . . He withers and runs the risks of going soft and dying.

It is in this context, of human degradation, that Zampetti takes up the question of pollution, wresting it away from the specialists who have not searched for the cause and finding the

Man is ultimately the proper subject of any discussion of the environment, because it is the interior man who makes the decisions which shape the world.

answer he is looking for in a passage from St. Mark (7:15-23):

> There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. . . . For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

Zampetti observes that this passage might have been directed at modern man, who pollutes himself by misusing his liberty. "Pollution of the spirit (greed, adultery, murder, egoism . . .) or moral pollution is the cause of the pollution of the body and, even though in a different way, of the pollution of nature." The real question, he argues, is the degradation not of nature but of man, and he cites as examples the spread of drugs and AIDS:

> Drugs are not called a plague, because he who takes them does so freely and thereby becomes sick voluntarily, as opposed to those who contract other diseases. But then the same argument can be applied to AIDS, which is actually the fruit of drug addiction and homosexuality. We could say that both are social plagues that result from man's poverty of being and to the drying up of the spirit.

Man is ultimately the proper subject of any discussion of the environment, because it is the interior man who makes the decisions which shape the world. "Drugs do not exist, but the drug addict. AIDS does not exist, but the man who has contracted the disease. The polluted sea does not exist, but man who, with the economic-productive system directed toward the satisfaction of individualistic interests, has polluted the sea. Man, man, and again man." Zampetti concludes his analysis of pollution by declaring that "man is dying together with society and nature" and calling for a diagnosis that will enable man to save himself—and society and nature as well—from destruction.

I shall not follow the philosopher in his ambitious proposals for reconstructing society, not because they are uninteresting or impossibly utopian. They are neither. But if modern man had shown the slightest inclination toward common sense, he would not be where he is today. Oh, we all talk as though we cared about what kind of world we lived in. We complain about the low level of political morality and then go out and vote for Bob Dole. We say we want our children to be educated, and then we send them to public school. We may even say we believe in God, but on Sunday we end up at the golf course or some ex-Calvinist church that reassures us that it is now OK to murder our children. Treat the fair words of man the consumer just as you would treat the pretty speech of a glandular teenage boy saying "I love you" to your daughter.

Consumism was the religion of Sodom, and if that city was not treated to a plague, it was destroyed by the fire and brimstone that fuel the industries of the modern cities of the plain. In those days, only one righteous man was found, though even his wife pined for the soft life of the French Quarter and a house in Georgetown. I used to hope that what man had done, he could undo, but the greatest mischief we have done is to ourselves, in destroying our capacity for leading a normal life and settling for everyday pleasures and duties. Birthday parties and good old books. Telling the old stories one more time and fishing with tackle that did not advertise our net worth. Living in a world where walking made sense, because the stretch between here and there was more interesting than either here or there.

We are all caught up in it, I as much as you as much as they, and if we actually made ourselves happier in destroying the planet, I might say: go ahead. There is a scrap of Greek verse which goes, "When I am dead, let the earth be mixed with fire. I'll no longer care." When someone quoted it to the emperor Nero, he emended the first line to "While I'm alive." That's the stuff. The worst of the Caesars—spoiled punks like Nero, Caligula, and Commodus—would fit right into the youth culture of the past 30 years, except Nero and Caligula had both been given an education. Gorged and dulled by the endless cycle of titillation and satiety, these "troubled youths" of ancient Rome turned to violence, when gluttony and fornication grew stale. Those who pursue pleasure for its own sake become impotent in the face of life. Life is already Hell for many Americans—five minutes of television should be enough to convince a sane man. But nothing lasts forever, not the towers of Babel or the dark Satanic mills. Lot escaped from Sodom with at least some of his family, and the reconstruction of the personal—like almost everything else of value—begins at home.

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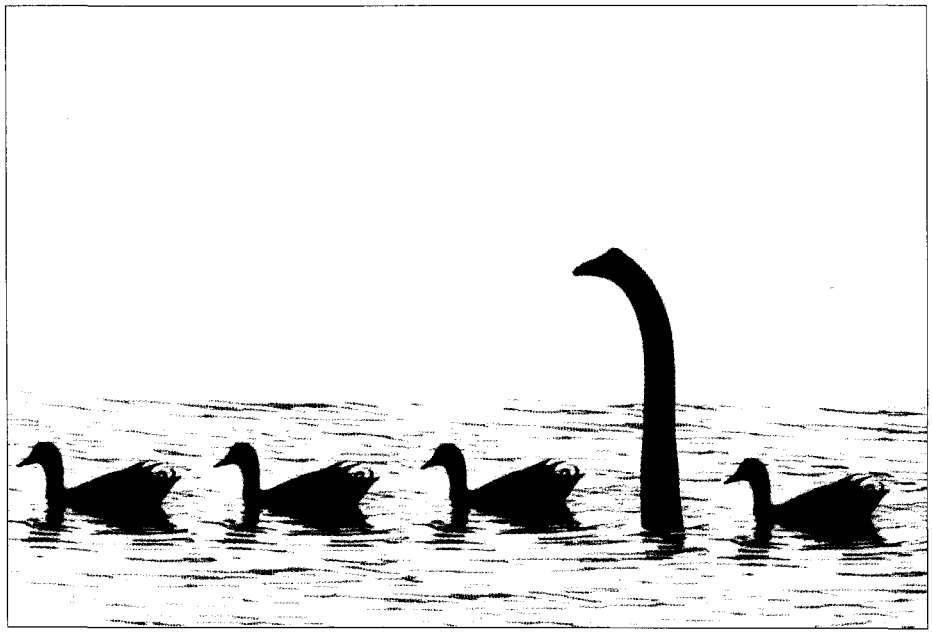
Conservation and Animal Welfare

by Stephen R.L. Clark



Igor Kopelnitsky

Not so long ago, nor all that far away, we knew our place. The old could command the young, parents command children, the well-born command the lowly-born, men command women, and the High King over all. No one need have any doubts about his duty. We all owed duties of deference to those above us, and of care to those below. Horses, dogs, and cattle had their position too (and one that was sometimes higher, in its way, than those of many humans). On the one hand, they could be punished for stepping out of line; on the other, they would be valued and rewarded for playing their part. Wild creatures were assigned to similar roles, at once a reflection of, and a justification for, the status society of civilized humanity. The vision still has enormous influence, even among people who think they have escaped. Witness that reactionary fiction *The Lion King*, which requires us to believe that the land will be fertile, and "at peace," if the rightful king (high up in the food chain) withstands the incursion of undisciplined hordes (hyenas) who seek to transcend their natures.

Status society does have merits. In its proper form, it is because we fulfill our duties of care, to our inferiors, that we may be owed obedience. As Humphrey Primatt, an 18th-century Anglican clergyman, insisted in his plea for decent treatment of nonhuman animals, *The Duty of Humanity to Inferior Creatures* (1776), "He who boasts of the dignity of his nature and the advantages of his station, and thence infers his right of oppression of his inferiors exhibits his folly as well as his malice." Those duties of care, and forbearance, were diminished when political and moral theorists successfully challenged status society in the name of contract. Instead of owing obedience to our natural superiors, the story went, we owed it only where there was, or could reasonably be thought to be, a contract of obedience. Mutual obligations, it was said, rested on an actual or hypothetical agreement, and a decent human society, accordingly, imposed identical duties of care and forbearance on all human beings. Nonhuman creatures, being incapable of making contracts or abiding by them, were excluded, as they had been by the Stoics, from all forms of justice. On the one hand, they could not be punished (strictly speaking); on the other, nothing that was done to them could be unlawful. They existed, as the Stoics had said, entirely for our use and profit. Nonhuman creatures had a lower status than any human being. Even as status crumbled as a moral and political norm for civilized humanity, it was reinforced, in its least respectful form, for everything nonhuman. Actually, uncivilized humanity, or "savages," were also treated as fair game: they too could not be judged to "own" the land they lived on, or to have made bargains that a civilized court would enforce. Nowadays, we pay lip-service to the thought that *all* human beings have equivalent rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Nonhuman creatures are still largely undefended.

In its 17th-century beginnings, contract society did not in fact give absolute rights of ownership and use to human beings. Strictly, we could never own the land itself, but only, at most,

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its fruits—and those on condition that we left as good for others. The moral doctrine that recent environmentalists have attributed (no doubt correctly) to the native peoples whom European colonists despised and conquered was actually one that those same Europeans held. The Minister of the British Crown who recently quoted Ruskin in support of the Rio summit on environmentalism might as easily have quoted Jefferson, Locke, or Leviticus. We had no "right" to destroy the land, nor deny it to other creatures who had as great a need of it as we. Nor could we have any "right" to treat nonhuman creatures cruelly. "You bought [the horse] with your money, it is true, and he is your property; but, whether you are apprised of it or not, you bought him with a condition necessarily annexed to the bargain. You could not purchase the right to use him with cruelty and injustice. Of whom could you purchase such a right? Who could make such a conveyance?" Ownership, in English and other law, has never conveyed a legal right to do exactly as we please with what we own, and there were plenty of rulings in our history to dictate some decent treatment for creatures that were our "property" (as being things that we could buy and sell). "The righteous man has a care for his beast, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel," so the Book of Proverbs dictated. Even when the wicked did nothing "against the law" in beating their dogs, their horses (or their wives and children—since it took a long time to remember that such things were also human), what they did would meet with public disapproval.

For though the surface doctrine was the Stoic one, that nonhuman creatures could not be treated "unjustly," the tradition was clear that certainly they could. "You shall not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn" (Deuteronomy 25:4); "you shall not yoke ox and ass together" (Deuteronomy 22:10). Both these commands mean more than what they simply say: the clear implication is that the animals who work and suffer for us shall not be refused their pay, nor put to work in ways that do not suit their natures. Everyone understood that there was, after all, a sort of bargain with domestic creatures—as almost everyone in Britain now condemns the present treatment of (male) calves surplus to the requirements of the dairy industry. The bargain was not an explicit, verbal one, but neither was the hypothetical bargain that we human citizens were said to have struck. There are very few cases of any explicit bargain at the root of any human state (Locke can identify only such occasions as those bargains between desperate ruffians, a/k/a the founders of Rome, that enabled them to seize a territory and make a state). The point about contract talk is simply to direct our attention to the advantages we individually gain from keeping the present peace. The peace is one that should be kept (it is a real peace), if all of us can gain from it. Similarly with our domestic creatures: our bargain is that we look after them. The word of the Lord to Ezekiel:

> Prophesy, man, against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them, You shepherds, these are the words of the Lord God: How I hate the shepherds of Israel who care only for themselves! Should not the shepherd care for the sheep? You consume the milk, wear the wool, and slaughter the fat beasts, but you don't feed the sheep. You have not encouraged the weary, tended the sick, bandaged the hurt, recovered the straggler, or searched for the lost; and even the strong you have driven with ruthless severity. . . . I will dismiss those shepherds: they shall care only for themselves no longer; I will rescue my sheep from their jaws, and they shall feed on them no longer (Ezekiel 34:1-10).

I acknowledge, of course, that the words refer to the rulers of Israel: but the metaphor makes no sense, in its context, unless real shepherds were really meant to care for sheep.

There were also rules for our relation with the wild. You shall not take both mother and young from any nest (Deuteronomy 22:6, Leviticus 22:28), nor plough up all the fields so as to deny food to the poor, the stranger, or the wild things in your country (Leviticus 19:9, 23:22, 25:6). If we do, the story went, we would be thrown out of the land: we enjoy it only on condition that we do not take it wholly for ourselves. "The whole world has rest and is at peace; it breaks into cries of joy. The pines themselves and the cedars of Lebanon exult over you: since you have been laid low, they say no man comes up to fell us" (Isaiah 14:7-8). The land shall have the sabbaths we denied to it (Leviticus 26:34).

I mention these commands, these tacit bargains, not to exalt one moral and religious tradition over all. Similar injunctions can be found elsewhere, and it is important that those who campaign for international change should find the appropriate seeds for ecological and humanitarian change within the customs of the relevant country. My purpose is at once to answer the common claim that Christian or Jewish tradition is "environmentally unfriendly," and to lay out the processes that have led us, in the settled West, from one moral code to another. The contract society eliminated, or strove to eliminate, many failings of status society. It did not wholly eliminate its merits, but the nonhuman suffered more as a result than need have happened. The older tradition included many duties of care and forbearance to the nonhuman, duties that could be rationalized as products of a sort of bargain quite as easily as liberal, human rights.

The next great shift in moral sensibility, which has also proved to be double-edged, introduced the notion that pain was, as such, an evil. We ought not to cause such evil, and maybe ought to take steps to prevent it. Until the 18th century, moralists probably took it as their task to show that pain was *not* an evil, or not one that decent people minded much about. It was wrong to betray one's friends and country, wrong to steal or to murder; greed, ill temper, and unchastity were wrong. Possibly it was wrong to rejoice in the *undeserved* suffering of others; it might also be wrong to regret their deserved suffering. Those moralists who then began to insist that pain was after all an evil, something that should not exist, and perhaps that it was the only real evil, were vulnerable to the charge that they were taking on the mind of brutes. Brutes, after all, felt pain: if pain were an evil, or the main or real evil, then we ought (absurdity!) to take their pain into account in reckoning on right actions. If brutes' pains mattered to these moralists, it must be because they were themselves brutish, cowardly, and licentious. The moral school that came to be called "utilitarians" played an important part in pressing for legislation to regulate the treatment of both domesticated and wild animals. If they could suffer, then we ought to treat them gently, and protect them against what injuries we could. It is unfortunate that "utilitarian" arguments are now taken to be those that turn on quantifiable, human advantage: save the whales because they might be useful later! The founders of the school would have been appalled

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by this: stop harassing the whales because it gives them serious pain, and has not even the excuse of sparing others pain.

The older ethical system urged us to live as decent human beings, and might easily have made the wider demand explicit: to allow or to help nonhuman creatures to live as decent a life according to their kind. The righteous man would have a care for his beasts, but would expect to see them suffer for good causes, ones that promoted virtuous living. The newer system denied that anything should ever be made to suffer, except to reduce the sum total of suffering. That dangerous concession made it right, after all, to make animals suffer if human suffering could thereby be reduced. And moralists retained enough of the outlook of a status society to believe, without thinking much about it, that *our* suffering was of another order than *theirs*. Animal pains and pleasures must be merely physical. Humans would suffer agonies (it was implied) if they could not have their favorite foods, or watch their favorite sports, or find out fascinating truths about the world. Humans suffer (it was asserted) far more pain at bruises, wounds, infections, cancers. So though we might regret giving pain to "animals," it must be better than allowing "humans" to have those pains instead.

It follows, unfortunately for nonhumans, that the humane, welfarist impulse had much less impact than its founders would have wished. Some things were outlawed: all those things, in fact, that our chief legislators did not themselves much want to do. Bull-baiting, cockfights, dogfights, torturing cats for fun became illegal—though not without protest from those who thought that these practices encouraged moral virtues such as courage (or at least indifference to blood and pain) and love of glory. But of course, it was urged, we should not Go Too Far: nonhumans, after all, are of another kind than humans. They remain, in fact, within a lower status, and depend upon our fluctuating kindness rather than on clear bargains or radical utilitarian concern.

Kindness does fluctuate, and so does our perception of what counts as pain. Mere (stabbing, throbbing, aching) pains of a clearly "physical" kind are not the only ones we now acknowledge. Animals may suffer agonies of boredom, loneliness, frustration, stress, which are far worse than momentary pains. Animal welfarists may acknowledge these and seek to prevent or cure them. They may even begin to wonder whether it is wrong to deprive a creature of a happy life, or of some natural functions, even if it does not actually suffer: a creature blinded from birth has been deprived of something good, even if it never knows its loss. Once that step of sympathy is taken it may even occur to us that killing a happy (or potentially happy) creature is a wrong. This goes beyond the muddled doctrines that we have inherited. Conventional moralists will usually agree that *hurting* animals (without a good excuse) is wrong, but not that it is wrong to kill them (painlessly). As so often, even conventional moralists are not quite so sure in practice: a family that brings a pet dog to be killed merely because they're tired of it, or want to go on holiday, are surely displaying some defect of character, betraying some implicit bargain. We no longer allow our children to go out killing cats, squirrels, or birds merely to try out their catapults or guns. We have begun, in fact, to think that causing pain *and death*, except for very good reasons, must be wrong. Whether culinary or cosmetic reasons are sufficient is in doubt. Are even "medical" reasons good enough? Erazim Kohak asks in *The Embers and the Stars* (1984), "What justifies the totally disproportionate cost of our presence? Ask it for once without presupposing the answer of the egotism of our species, as God might ask it about His creatures: why should a dog or a guinea pig die an agonizing death in a laboratory experiment so that some human need not suffer just such a fate?"

Part of the reason for this gradual shift in moral sensibility is the discovery that our predecessors were mistaken about facts. For centuries we had believed that human and nonhuman creatures were of radically different kinds, and we were in a special sense God's favorites. The status society itself was partly based upon a wish to treat the different classes, sects, and sexes of humanity as if they were different species. Our view of nonhuman nature (as I said before) was formed in a complex interaction with our view of human nature. Because we had to assume that classes, sects, and sexes were distinct, we projected just those patterns on the natural, nonhuman world (as in *The Lion King*). Because humans and nonhumans were of different kinds, it need not be surprising that we should use quite different rules about them. But in the last century, we have learned that the older account of "species" was mistaken. Creatures are not "members of the same species" because they share a distinct nature, unlike any other. They share as much as they do with each other (and many things with others) because they are members of a group of interbreeding populations whose boundaries in space and time are vague. We have plenty of evidence that other, nonhuman animals are very much like us: they do not only "feel pain," but engage in social intercourse, make plans, make choices, very much as we do. The other great apes, in particular, live lives entirely recognizable as hominid, to the extent that a truly objective taxonomy might reckon chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans belonged to the same genus, *Homo*. I hope to live to see an international recognition of their "human rights," and legislation to protect them from abuse. Whether the same rights can ever be extended to *all* creatures must be doubtful; if we cannot even extend them to the apes, we must begin to doubt that any of us can have them.

> We should not muzzle the ox, nor plough up every field, nor seek to control the lives of creatures who can manage quite well by themselves.

As we begin to realize that our status is suspect, that we cannot just go on accepting the pretexts and compromises that allow us, in practice, to do almost everything "we" choose to do, to "animals," to "savages," and to the land itself, we need to work out bargains, and new ways to enforce them. We need a "new pact with nature." One route to this involves a Global Ecological Authority, "with teeth." Unfortunately, a GEA would inevitably be a global government, an absolute dictatorship, and most of us would shrink from such a thing. Even if it were founded with the best of intentions, it would most probably be run with the very worst. The alternative route to moral

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(and environmental) sense is the slow and careful formulation of national law and international treaty, founded in the (differing) moral sensibilities of peoples around the world. We do need some general principle, and I would propose the liberal principle itself, suitably modified to include, explicitly, more of the world's creatures than past liberals thought to do. We should act according to those laws that allow as many creatures as possible, of as many kinds as possible, the chance of as decent a life as possible. This is not to say (but rather to deny) that we should always act to prevent, cure, punish injuries. In a liberal world creatures do suffer and fail and die. The liberal bargain simply insists that our mutual dealings should not be rigged to promote the interests of any particular individual or group. We should not muzzle the ox, nor plough up every field, nor seek to control the lives of creatures who can manage quite well by themselves.

That vision is not of the Peaceable Kingdom when "none shall hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain," but only of the liberal society, where we are at liberty to try our luck, and to make, and enforce, such bargains as can be seen as fair. In moving toward its realization we should aim to incorporate insights and working practices from earlier moralists. Status society, contract society, virtue ethics, and utilitarian ethics all contribute something to our understanding. Legislation and international treaty take shape over many years, according to no one principle. What matters most is the direction that we are heading. And we will of course see no improvement as long as the demand exists for something that we cannot achieve without injustice. Even decent people choose to ignore the costs of their favorite foodstuff, favorite game or pastime or ideal way of life. Once they begin to understand those costs, they may eventually make fewer demands. Until they do, all legislation to protect the land, and the creatures that we share it with, will be mere words. The change, if there is to be a change, will start with individual decisions, individual surrenders.

2nd "Byronic" Etude

Our City Bountiful

by Dan Michael Magnuson

Just out beyond my city's bountiful skirts
We drive the late Augustan days in laughter
My children wrestle in the unclipped grass
Top off the afternoon with "Häagen Daez"

I Wok an early dinner Then to chase out again
To "K" and "Wal" Our neighborhood doubly blessed
My iron son off to the "Y" Christian and Karate
How multicultural all of us have become

Later on she says "Perhaps let's go drive up north
For some evening moonlight on the river Trees
And let's take the kids to see the Monster
Out at Byron* I smile and turn the sacred keys

In the ordinary exhaustion of the afternoon
She takes our son with her Wherever it is she goes
While I and my daughter To the other side of town

How my necessity now flowers where my children dream

(*Byron, IL: location of a nuclear
power plant on the Rock River)

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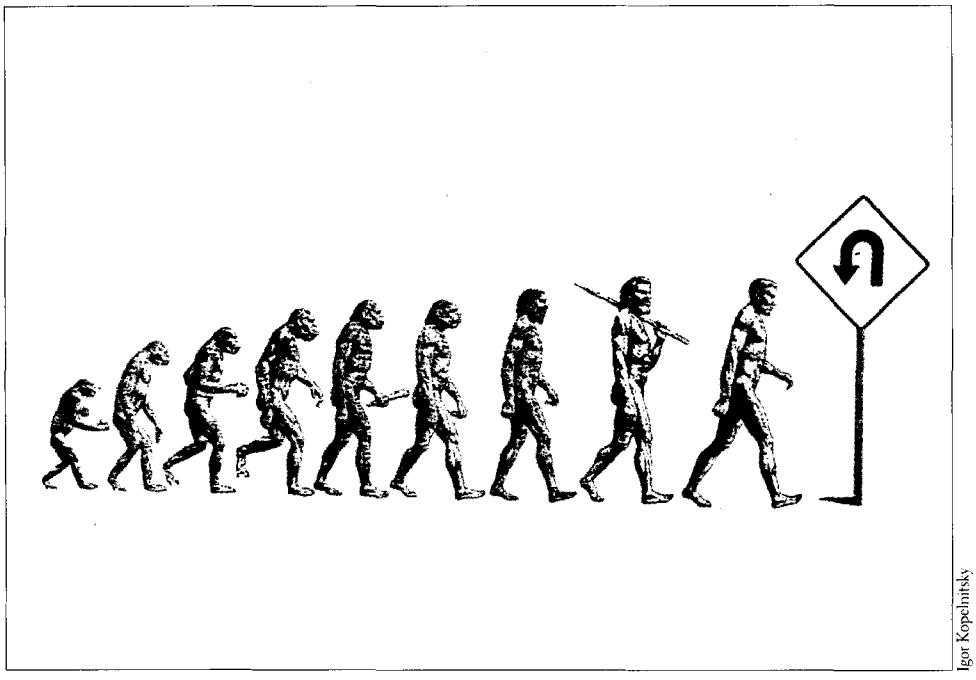
Searching for a Past That Never Was

The Strange Story of Ecosystem Preservation

by Alston Chase



Igor Kopelnitsky

In January 1995, residents of the small town of Libby, Montana, received a surprising invitation. Proffered by federal authorities, it announced that meetings would be held on the 28th, simultaneously at Libby and 28 other locations throughout Montana and Idaho, to discuss something called the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project. Its purpose, they were told, was to establish, in President Clinton's words, "an ecosystem-based strategy" for managing "eastside forests"—i.e., those federal lands lying east of the Cascade Mountains crest in Oregon and Washington—along with lands of the Upper Columbia River Basin in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, and Nevada. The citizens of Libby were learning what people in Washington already knew: that "ecosystems management" is the most popular buzz-phrase in politics today. Taking the capitol by storm, it serves as the foundation for all environmental law and policy and captivates the imagination of Republicans and Democrats alike.

During the last six years, the Bush and Clinton administrations have made "ecosystems management" the guiding policy for a dozen federal agencies. In 1990, as part of its "New Perspectives" program, the National Forest Service adopted ecosystems management. In 1992, the Bush White House announced it would follow an "ecosystem approach," when administering the Endangered Species Act. In 1994, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced "an ecosystem approach to fish and wildlife conservation" that included organizing the country into 52 separate "ecosystem units." Shortly after, the Bureau of Land Management embraced ecosystems management as well. Today, it forms an integral part of Vice President Al Gore's effort to "reinvent government."

Clearly, this notion has captured the imagination of America's political leaders and is changing the shape of government. But what does it mean? And what are its implications?

Combining two simple notions—the unity and balance of nature—the concept presupposes that nature is composed of interconnected parts that interact to keep everything in or near equilibrium. So long as these systems retain all their members (i.e., sustain their biological diversity), they remain healthy. But if they lose enough parts (i.e., species), their capacity for self-regulation fails and they become unstable.

This hypothesis is popular because it seems to explain what has gone wrong with the environment and how to fix it: environmental health requires ecosystems to remain in balance, which in turn demands that they retain their biodiversity. And the best way to ensure these conditions is to leave ecosystems alone. Ecosystems management, in essence, means keeping humans away from nature.

But this doctrine is not what it seems. Rather than new science, it is old philosophy, whose history raises some disturbing questions about the future of preservation. Its central tenets—that nature is constant and harmonious—are ancient beliefs, long predating the advent of Western civilization. They were recurring themes in early Greek myths, and served as foundations of classical Hellenistic science. The Pythagoreans claimed to hear musical harmony in the universe, and Greek physicians believed in the balance of "humors" and emphasized the ability of nature to heal.

Alston Chase is the author of Playing God in Yellowstone: The Destruction of America's First National Park *and, most recently,* In a Dark Wood: The Fight over Forests and the Rising Tyranny of Ecology *(Houghton Mifflin).*

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In the fifth century B.C., Herodotus reports that Arabians believed "the whole world would swarm with these serpents" (snakes) were it not for the fact that "Divine Providence" was "a wise contriver." Belief that "Divine Providence" ensured the harmony of nature reverberated among naturalists during the Enlightenment, and similar notions pervaded early American thought. In the 18th century, the Swedish scientist Carolus Linnaeus, whose work was a forerunner of modern ecology, elevated the notion of plants and animals interacting for mutual benefit to the status of a scientific principle, which he called "the economy of nature." Similar notions were embraced by the German biologist, Ernst Haeckel, when he conceived of ecology in 1866. Describing his new discipline as "the whole science of the relations of the organism to the environment including, in the broad sense, all the 'conditions of existence,'" he suggested that all things animate and inanimate are parts of a larger whole, or community.

> Thanks to its political utility, the ecologists found the self-regulating ecosystem to be a money tree. As federal research funds flowed, public agencies forged long-term associations with universities, which in turn expanded ecological teaching and research.

"He intended his readers to visualize," notes historian Peter J. Bowler, "a kind of global organic economy in which all species played a part." And all things, whether living or not, Haeckel supposed, contain a spiritual element. "He argued that matter and spirit were manifestations of a single underlying substance," notes Bowler, "which meant that even the most primitive form of life had some spiritual qualities."

Haeckel's ecology, therefore, was more metaphysical than scientific. It encompassed two closely related doctrines, well known to philosophers, called "holism" and "spiritual monism." Holism is the view that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts—that things can be understood only within the context of larger communities of which they are members. Spiritual monists believe that a material world does not exist and that nature consists entirely of mental entities, or ideas.

The same spiritualism was embraced by America's first great ecologist, Frederic Clements, in 1916. Soil, plants, and animals, Clements suggested, form parts of superorganisms infused with spirit. These biological communities, he said, are like individuals that are born, grow, and die in predictable ways. They are always in motion towards a goal. They move from disorder to order, from loose associations to close-knit communities, from growth to stability. Only disturbances such as forest fires, volcanic eruptions, or human interference halt or reverse this process. But after such interruptions, nature always renews its inexorable march toward balance and stability.

Like Haeckel, Clements' science reflected fuzzy thinking. For neither monism nor holism are scientific. Spiritual objects cannot be studied empirically, and the supposed something extra that makes the whole "greater than the sum of its parts" is not observable. To be scientifically admissible, a theoretical construct such as Clements' superorganism had to be logically embedded within a theory whose key concepts were "anchored" to empirical reality. And it was not.

To extricate biology from this philosophical dead end, in 1935 Clements' friend, Oxford botanist A.G. Tansley, introduced a new concept that he thought more acceptable, namely, the *ecosystem*. "Though the organisms may claim our primary interest," he wrote, "when we are trying to think fundamentally we cannot separate them from their special environment, with which they form one physical system. . . . It is the systems so formed which, from the point of view of the ecologist, are the basic units of nature on the face of the earth. These *ecosystems*, as we may call them, are of the most various kinds and sizes."

Unlike Clements' superorganism, Tansley's ecosystems were entirely physical. But although rejecting his friend's spiritual monism, Tansley retained his holism. Thus even Tansley's ecosystem was unobservable. A theoretical concept, it did not signify anything on a map. As plant geographer Richard Hartshorn observed in 1939: "The problem of establishing the boundaries of a geographic region . . . presents a problem for which we have no reason to even hope for an objective solution. . . . The regional entities which we construct on this basis are therefore in the full sense mental constructions."

To advance their fledgling discipline, therefore, ecosystem advocates should have concentrated on observation and experimentation. Instead, they went in the opposite direction, developing highly abstract theories that rested on little or no evidence. In a landmark 1946 paper, Yale University ecologist G. Evelyn Hutchinson led the way. The ecosystem, he suggested, was a feedback loop of energy flows which operated to keep the system stable in the face of environmental disturbances.

As a tool for analyzing such systems, Hutchinson employed a new kind of mathematics, called cybernetics. Conceived by Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor Norbert Wiener during World War II and based on his work designing aiming devices for antiaircraft guns, cybernetics was the science of self-regulating machines, like guided missiles and thermostats. Such devices exhibited "purposeful" behavior, such as aiming at a target or maintaining a constant temperature, because they were governed by feedback loops that kept the machine in equilibrium. And cybernetics was the mathematics for such systems.

Used with the ecosystem model, cybernetics seemed a powerful analytic tool. When the ecosystem was pictured as a feedback loop of energy flows, operating like a thermostat to keep the community in balance, it appeared to open the way

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for using physics to understand living things and their environment. Indeed, the influence of cybernetics was so intoxicating that little attention was paid to the lack of evidence for the ecosystem models that employed it.

"One of the major criticisms of mathematical-theoretical approaches to ecology," wrote biologist Robert J. McIntosh, "is that they commonly rest on simplifying assumptions, often unstated, that make them tractable mathematically but nonsense biologically." Such was the new ecologists' fascination with equilibrium. These scholars emphasized the balance of nature, not because the evidence supported it but because their mathematics demanded it.

Examining the concept of niche—the habitat occupied by an organism—Hutchinson would reach a conclusion that soon became conventional wisdom throughout American culture: that biological diversity promotes ecosystem stability. "Communities of many diversified organisms," he wrote in 1958, "are better able to persist than are communities of fewer less diversified organisms." But this was an attribute which, like stability, was required not by nature but by mathematics. "The conventional wisdom of ecology," wrote McIntosh, "held that diversity enhanced ecosystem stability by increasing the number of links in the ecological web. This idea became almost axiomatic to some biologists despite indications that diversity of trees in relatively stable or climax forests was less than that in seral or changing forests."

Nevertheless, despite a lack of data, other ecologists, encouraged and subsidized by the federal government, embraced this new more "scientific" approach. In 1946, the Atomic Energy Commission established a Division of Biology and Medicine to study the effects of atomic fallout, inaugurating ambitious ecosystem research programs at national laboratories and nuclear reservations in Oak Ridge, Brookhaven, Hanford, and Savannah River. At Savannah, it contracted with University of Georgia ecologist Eugene Odum to conduct studies of farmland abandoned after construction of the nuclear facility. Meanwhile, the Office of Naval Research began paying Eugene's brother Howard to study mineral springs in Florida. And in 1954, at the request of the AEC, the Odum brothers traveled to Eniwetok, in the South Pacific, to study, in their words, "the effects of radiation on whole populations and entire ecological systems in the field."

To be sure, many ecologists rejected the ecosystem as mere recycled holism and spiritual monism. Evolutionary ecologists, in particular, stressed that competition between creatures and not self-regulating ecosystems determined evolution. Invoking the rigorous standards of modern science, they insisted that theories about purposeful change and complex wholes were not testable. But while such critics had science on their side, they failed to influence public opinion and policy. Their hypotheses, suggesting nature is random, could not justify political agendas. By contrast, ecosystems advocates, as historian Joel B. Hagen comments, "emphasized the important role that ecologists could play in shaping public policy."

In other words, ecosystems ecologists had a political agenda and critics of the idea did not. Indeed, from its inception ecology served as a rationale for social planning. Inspired by his belief that all creatures, including humans, were part of an interlocking web of nature, Haeckel founded a political movement called the Monist League, dedicated to promoting a back-to-the-land ethic (to put Germans back in touch with nature) and to ridding Germany of alien "dualistic" beliefs such as Judaism and Christianity.

Clements, too, intended the ideas of ecologists to aid social planning. As Bowler explains, Clements "saw science as a way of controlling the economy as a whole" and thought ecology "would show us how to manage natural productivity of an entire region." And "where Clements had once justified government control of the environment by appealing to the image of society as a super-organism, the new systems theory offered the prospect of social control through the setting up of stable feedback loops of human interactions. In an atmosphere of postwar optimism, science seemed to offer the prospect of creating a new and more secure world."

Thanks to its political utility, the ecologists found the self-regulating ecosystem to be a money tree. As federal research funds flowed, public agencies forged long-term associations with universities, which in turn expanded ecological teaching and research. Private philanthropies inaugurated grants programs designed to promote the idea. In 1970, President Richard M. Nixon approved funding for United States participation in the International Biological Programme, an effort to develop comprehensive models for understanding ecosystems. In 1974, the National Science Foundation launched a long-term, generous grants program to promote the idea.

Then, with the publication of Barry Commoner's 1971 best-seller, *The Closing Circle*, the ecosystem idea captured the public imagination. The earth, conservationists decided, was a machine, a computer, a net! Preservation was saving all the cogs! Since ecosystem instability threatened humanity, it was thought, biological diversity must be protected by reestablishing "pre-Columbian" conditions by isolating threatened habitat from human interference. To this end, the Endangered Species Act of 1973 was passed "to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depend may be conserved." Soon this idea would infuse the rest of federal preservation laws and policies.

The simplicity of this idea was seductive, and its use of mathematics gave it the patina of respectability—establishing, as Bowler observes, "a more 'scientific' image for ecology." Yet this "science" was only skin deep. "Ecologists' increasing reliance on the physical sciences and engineering for theory, mathematical approaches, concepts, models and metaphors," biologist Daniel B. Botkin wrote, "led to an increasingly sophisticated growth of mathematical theory (formal models) that required and led to exact equilibria, and to a world view of nature as the great machine. These foundations led to an untenable situation: the predominant, accepted ecological theories asserted that natural, undisturbed populations and ecological communities . . . would achieve constancy in abundance, an assertion that became inconsistent with new observations."

Underneath, the same old monism and holism prevailed. The "modern" ecosystem idea was merely Haeckel's and Clements' metaphysics dressed in the fancy clothing of mathematics. Natural change was still deemed to be directed toward the goal of stability, only now "energy" had replaced "spirit" as the driving force. And these replacements were incapable of transforming abstract philosophy into hard science.

Meanwhile, the empirical evidence was revealing that the idea of a stable, self-regulating ecosystem was fundamentally flawed. Random disturbance, not permanence or order, seems to govern nature. Left alone, biological communities do not tend toward equilibrium, but lurch wildly, propelled by rapid

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shifts in species composition, climate, and other conditions. As paleogeographer Cathy Whitlock wrote, "No millennium has been exactly like any other during the last 20,000 years." Therefore, "conservation efforts that emphasize the preservation of communities or vegetation types will probably be unsuccessful because future climate changes quite likely will dismantle the community or vegetation type of concern." And one of these natural agents of change is humanity. The vaunted "original and unchanging pre-settlement" conditions never existed. Rather than a forested Garden of Eden untouched by human hands, the pre-Columbian landscape was an ever-changing human artifact.

Most experts on prehistory agree that Native American hunting and burning radically altered the landscape before the first settlers arrived, and that forests, rather than shrinking, are perhaps more extensive in modern times than before Columbus landed. As University of Wisconsin geographer William M. Denevan observed, "the Native American landscape of the early sixteenth century was a humanized landscape almost everywhere. Populations were large, forest composition had been modified, grasslands had been created, wildlife disrupted, and erosion was severe in places. Earthworks, roads, fields, and settlements were ubiquitous."

Ecological historian Charles Kay agrees: "The modern concept of wilderness as areas without human influence is a myth." The pre-Columbian continent, says Kay, "was not a 'wilderness' waiting to be discovered, instead it was home to tens of millions of aboriginal peoples before European-introduced diseases decimated their numbers." These peoples "structured entire plant and animal communities" by limiting wildlife populations with their hunting and "purposefully modifying the vegetation with fire." Game, relentlessly hunted, was often scarce, and vegetation, rather than consisting of mature forest, was constantly renewed by frequent aboriginal burning. Only animals such as bison, whose migrating herds periodically escaped pursuing Indians, persisted in relatively large numbers.

Clearly, these ecosystem models were intended not to reflect nature but to support a theory of value. They suggested that nature *ought* to prefer stability, *ought* to be self-regulating, *ought* to prefer diversity. As philosopher Carl Hempel observed in 1958, when a scientist says that something is necessary for the "survival of group or organism" these words may have "the deceptive appearance of clarity" but are unavoidably value-laden. "For when we speak of biological needs or requirements . . . we construe these, not as conditions of just the barest survival but as conditions of persistence in, or return to, a 'normal' or 'healthy' state, or to a state in which the system is a 'properly functioning whole.'" Thus "there is definite danger that different investigators will use the concept of functional prerequisite . . . with valuational overtones corresponding to their diverse conceptions of what are the most 'essential' characteristics of 'genuine' survival for a system of the kind under consideration."

Theories of self-regulating ecosystems cannot, therefore, even in principle, distinguish fact from value. To understand a thing, according to such reasoning, is to know how that thing ought to behave within the system. It reflects a teleological view of nature not unlike medieval Aristotelianism, which had insisted on knowing the "proper ends" of things. Equating equilibrium and biodiversity with value-laden expressions such as "ecological health" and "resiliency," systems ecologists slid between fact and value, science and advocacy, because their paradigm did not allow them to tell the difference.

In this way, ecosystem advocates have emerged as the high priests of a new morality. Jerry Franklin, former president of the Ecological Society of America and leader of "New Forestry" science, laces his work with emotive references to the "integrity of our forest and stream ecosystems" and exhorts his readers to "adopt a forest ethic" and to "approach forest ecosystems with the respect that their complexity and beauty deserve." Harvard professor Edward O. Wilson saturates his writing with ethical exhortations—touting the "intrinsic values of organic diversity," demanding that a "practical ethic" is "urgently needed" and that "it is time to invent moral reasoning of a new and more powerful kind." As Bowler says about such ecological reasoning, "We can no longer see science as the source of value-free information. . . . The use of scientific ideas to uphold social values has been so obvious in this area that more perceptive scientists have given up pretending that they have a method for gathering purely objective knowledge."

Since America's preservation policies are based on this flawed idea of the self-regulating ecosystem, they are, in effect, aimed at restoring and preserving conditions that never existed and never could exist. By seeking to do the impossible—stop change by insulating biological systems from human influence—they are actually achieving the exact opposite result—bringing about alterations to the landscape that imperil countless creatures.

Rather than achieving "preservation," efforts to insulate biota from disruption spells catastrophe for many species whose survival requires either disturbed habitats or young ("early successional") rapidly changing, biological communities. In Mendocino County, the Lotus Blue Butterfly apparently went extinct recently, two scientists reported, "due to a decline in early successional habitat supporting its principal host plant *lotus formosissimus*." In Oregon, the Silverspot Butterfly, which thrived in pre-Columbian times when native American burning sustained its preferred grasslands, was declared endangered as the absence of human-caused fires allowed forests to encroach on its territory. In New York, the Karner Blue Butterfly remains at risk for similar reasons. In Texas, black-capped vireos have become endangered, as too much protection destroys its preferred habitat of oaks, sumacs, and shrubbery—conditions which, before European settlement, had been sustained by burning and soil erosion. And in wilderness areas, wildlife sanctuaries, and national parks throughout the country, spreading old growth forests are decimating the habitat of countless other creatures that depend on early successional conditions.

Meanwhile, overly protected forests are dying of old age, thus creating what the National Commission on Wildfires described in 1994 as "a fire environment so disaster-prone in many areas that it will periodically and tragically overwhelm our best efforts at fire prevention and suppression." Nationally, deer are five times more numerous than when Columbus landed, and are pushing endangered plants to the brink of extinction. In the West, overpopulated elk are destroying willow and aspen that sustain a host of creatures, from beaver to grizzly bears. And thanks to overly abundant prey, predators have multiplied as well. In the Rockies, mountain lions are more numerous than at any other time in history. Not coincidentally, they are increasingly preying on pets and children. Lion assaults were ten times as frequent from 1970 to 1990 as between 1909 and 1932.

Because of the glaring flaws in the ecosystem idea and the

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disastrous consequences of policies based upon it, most scientists today would agree with environmental historian Donald Worster, who said in 1994 that "the ecosystem has receded in usefulness. . . . Nature should be regarded as a landscape of patches, big and little . . . changing continually through time and space, responding to an unceasing barrage of perturbations." The *New York Times* summed up this new consensus among ecologists in 1990:

> The concept of natural equilibrium long ruled ecological research and governed the management of such natural resources as forests and fisheries. It led to the doctrine, popular among conservationists, that nature knows best and that human intervention in it is bad by definition. . . . Now an accumulation of evidence has gradually led many ecologists to abandon the concept or declare it irrelevant, and others to alter it drastically. They say that nature is actually in a continuing state of disturbance and fluctuation. Change and turmoil, more than constancy and balance, is the rule. As a consequence, say many leaders in the field, textbooks will have to be rewritten and strategies of conservation and resource management will have to be rethought.

Unfortunately, little rethinking has occurred. For while critics of the self-regulating ecosystem idea may have won the intellectual battle, they are losing the policy war. The real popularity of this concept still lies in its usefulness in justifying social planning. By positing the need to "protect the stability of ecosystems," the self-regulating ecosystem idea appears to support environmentalist calls for more federal control of land, justify an expanded role for government, and turn biologists into what writers Mark L. Plummer and Charles C. Mann have dubbed "ecological mandarins" empowered to tell the rest of us how to live.

Accordingly, the Environmental Protection Agency recently announced that it would now give highest priority to protecting "ecosystem stability" from "man-made stressors" that upset it. And last year, the Clinton administration offered its own "reforms" of the Endangered Species Act that will take "a new approach to preserving ecosystem health," while Republican Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon last year proposed the Ecosystem Management Act of 1995, establishing an Ecosystem Management Commission to "identify strategies for implementing ecosystem management."

To administer the spreading empire, federal authorities have created Babylonian towers of bureaucracies, employing space-age technology. This includes the National Biological Survey, which will feed information concerning "ecoregions" into a National Spatial Data Infrastructure, using a plan known as the National Hierarchical Framework of Ecological Units and aided by a computer program called the Geographic Information System, which in turn includes both a National Wetlands Inventory and a program for identifying "holes" in biodiversity called "GAP analysis."

In 1993, President Clinton unveiled the most ambitious "ecosystem management" plan so far. Dubbed "Option 9," it would protect "old-growth forest ecosystems" by controlling economic and recreational activity in 24 million acres of public lands along the west slope of the Cascades in the Pacific Northwest. Yet while calling for a labyrinth of technical committees, planning teams, scientists, and agencies, its goal remains ancient mythology: to preserve "ecosystem stability" by restoring "presettlement conditions." Option 9 would "restore" old-growth forests until they cover 65 percent of the region, even though solid evidence suggests that these mature trees covered only *5 to 38 percent* of the Northwest during the last thousand years, and that today's "blanket" may very well surpass prehistoric averages.

As the citizens of Libby, Montana, discovered, planners, refusing to be diverted by mere contrary evidence, are spreading their net eastward. The ink was not dry on Option 9 before Clinton extended it, launching a similar program for forests on the east slope of the Cascades in 1993 and then in 1994 initiating the Upper Columbia River Basin plan that reaches into Montana. And given the bipartisan support for such grand schemes, this is just the beginning. Since ecosystems are fictional entities with no exact boundaries, there is little to stop the juggernaut before it reaches the Atlantic Ocean. To paraphrase Keynes, there is nothing so dangerous as an attractive, but false, idea. ◁©

Salvation

by Harold McCurdy

Not to the headlines look for hope
Nor to the Hubble telescope
Or scientists on a daring climb
Up some bare lunar mountain slope.

Not from the big names and big news
Expect salvation; and refuse
Temptation by the very chic
To cramp feet in imported shoes.

Seek out wild pastures, the wild wood.
On naked foot pursue the good
That, unrenowned, emerges where
Camera has never come, nor could.

In the unheard of, the unseen,
Salvation waits. Let darkness lean
Tenderly toward you, that, by grace,
Tears may well up and wash you clean.

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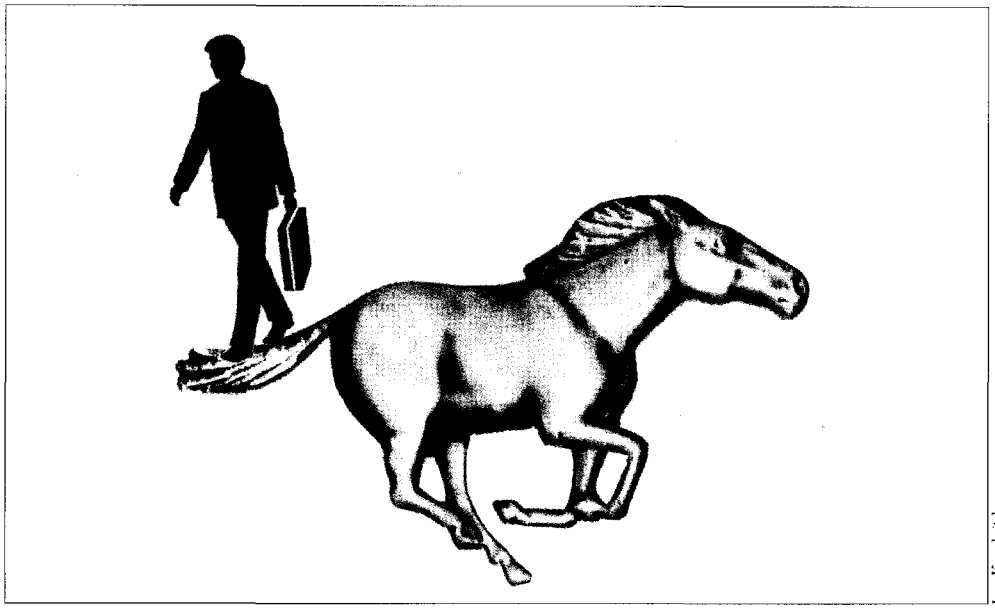
Environmentalism, Culture, and Politics

by Ed Marston and Chilton Williamson, Jr.



Igor Kopelnitsky

The following remarks are excerpted and arranged from a series of letters exchanged between Ed Marston, publisher of the environmentalist newspaper in Paonia, Colorado, *High Country News*, and Chilton Williamson, Jr., of *Chronicles*, in response to questions posed by Mr. Williamson during January and February 1996.

Does a traditional Western culture exist today, and are opponents of environmental "reform" justified in defending their "custom and culture"?

EM: A traditional Western culture existed when I moved to the West in the mid-1970's. It consisted of small towns, embedded in the public lands, and seeing themselves as living off the lands: farming, mining, logging, ranching, light tourism. I say "seeing themselves as living off the land" because only a small proportion of the residents of these towns actually worked the land by the 1970's: insurance agents have always outnumbered cowboys in the West, and by the middle of the decade, retirees outnumbered everyone else in the small-town West. Nevertheless, the West saw itself and prided itself as being attached to the land, and that's what attracted me to the region. Unlike in urban areas, people tended to live in the towns they worked in. If a bust forced them to commute, their commute was likely to be to Saudi Arabia or to a construction job in some distant city, from which they returned, at best, on weekends. The small towns tended to mix the classes as well. I read recently where a real estate developer who had lived in Aspen for many years said that his golf partner used to be the guy who picked up his garbage. Today, he told the *Aspen Times*, that would no longer be possible.

In the late 1970's, the coal companies in the valley I live in changed their management technique. Until then, accountants, engineers, personnel people, et al., managed the mine from the nearest big city—Denver, in our case—leaving only the working people and the mine superintendent in the community. When the newer mines began locating their white-collar workforce in the mining towns, bigger and woodier houses—"chalets" and the like—began to sprout in the "suburbs" around Paonia, population 1,400. These newcomers complained of lack of "shopping," which meant lack of a suburban society they could fit into, with golf courses and shopping malls and "nice" places to have lunch and dinner, but they could at least have "nice" homes.

Still, most of the mine's workforce was made up of people who operated heavy equipment or actually shoveled coal. But that changed drastically in the energy and minerals bust of the 1980's, when prices plummeted and coal and copper and other producers had to get incredibly productive. The workforce is now much more highly trained and educated. There are more pencil-pushers writing the programs that control the huge equipment, maintaining the spare parts inventory (you cannot afford a shutdown), safety experts who spend every working hour plotting to push down the accident rate, planning way in advance what every event in the mine will be. What I saw was an end to the rough 'n' ready West. A firm wanted sober technicians who will show up every day to manage a $50-million operation, rather than a devil-may-care miner willing to risk his life beneath the ground arm wrestling an unpredictable Mother Nature.

So to say that environmental rules are pushing on the traditional custom and culture of the West is a misreading of the situation. If blame is to be placed anywhere, it is to be placed on the workings of our economy and its implacable demands for efficiency and productivity. And that has meant the replacement of a rural workforce and rural values with an urban, or rather suburban, workforce and suburban values. Why don't the custom 'n' culture folks take out after the modern economy and the natural resource companies that personify the economy? The kind interpretation is that they do not see it happening. The unkind interpretation is that they are front men and women for the most backward of the natural resource

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firms—the ones that cannot adapt to the national demand for environmental quality. And the least charitable interpretation is that they are moral cowards, afraid to take on corporations but willing to beat up on the Sierra Club.

CW: It seems to me that, in arguing that a traditional Western culture has been substantially weakened since the mid-1970's, you are largely extrapolating from your residency on the West Slope of Colorado. Wyoming, of course, is far and away the last populated of the Intermountain States, but from observation made in the course of considerable travel in the Rockies, from Canada to Mexico, I believe suburbanization has been confined to certain areas and communities within the states—areas surrounded by regions and other communities that approximate Paonia and its environs as you remember them. (My own town of Kemmerer is manifestly unsuburbanized.) In these communities, it matters very little, from a cultural standpoint, whether one is a cowboy, or a banker, or sells insurance, or writes books and articles. Whatever they do for a living, the majority of the residents of these places have rural interests, rural skills, and a fundamentally rural orientation. Everyone hunts, everyone camps; many town people are related to outlying ranch families, or are descended from them, and help with seasonal ranch work. They keep horses, put them into shows, ride in rodeos, and enroll their children in 4-H. This is why I believe that the West's attachment to, and dependency on, the land is more than false self-perception, a refusal to face the fact of a changed reality.

I too like Western society for its absence of class awareness, its social structure divided or distinguished by occupation rather than by class affiliation and income status. And we obviously agree that the parts of the West that have lost this classless character are those most affected by wealthy recreationists and retirees arriving from someplace else: Vail and Aspen in Colorado, Jackson in Wyoming. So far, however, I have not observed management employed by the big energy companies and imported from elsewhere to have had much perverse effect in this respect. Rather, they appear to have become assimilated into the local culture of these small Western energy towns. My experience is that, instead of complaining about the lack of local or regional shopping, these newcomers drive to Salt Lake City 130 miles away to visit the malls, and on alternate weekends go camping or fishing up the fork, like everyone else. The same, I would say, goes for those holding the newly created pencil-pushing computer-hacking jobs. They cannot change the natives, so they join them.

Jim Catron, legal counsel for Catron County, New Mexico, believes that new arrivals to the West will become acculturated to traditional Western manners, mores, and habits of thought. Western culture, he believes, will prove attractive to these people because it works: not only does it create a strong sense of personal identity that mall rats and suburbanites lack, but it is suited to circumstances of existence in the West (climate, geography) that are unique and unchangeable by human activity and human will. For example, he cites a friend of his son's at the University of New Mexico: a Jewish girl whose grandparents moved West from New York many years ago. Today, this young lady of Eastern extraction breaks horses, rodeos, explores wilderness, and chews tobacco.

Many Westerners believe that environmentalism will either work drastic changes in traditional Western life or make such changes inevitable. Is this a fair and accurate perception?

EM: It is fair to say that the entire working of our system is going to transform the West. The environmentalist agendum is part of that transforming engine. But let us say we drop the environmental part of it. We would still get the transformation—the culture-destroying part—but we would not get clean air, clean water, intact watersheds and forests, and the rest. Big mining and big logging, and so on, are waging as much of a war on the West as Secretary Babbitt and the Sierra Club are.

CW: We agree that the working of the American system is on track to ruin the West. But environmentalism is a part of that agendum, in ways that not all of its members recognize, or would approve of if they did. Because most environmentalists are also urbanites or suburbanites, and both of these classes of people regard nature, the country, "wilderness" as a recreational locale, not as their place of work—since it is not. But human culture is the product not of play but of work. This is an anthropological and sociological fact. No work, no custom—or culture.

Granted, big mining and big logging, etc., are as destructive as Babbitt and the Sierra Club. But Washington, D.C.—whether directed by Newt Gingrich or Bill Clinton—uses environmental regulation as a means of political control. Here is my own—in some ways highly personal—dilemma: I want to see the devolution of political control take place in this country, in the West as every place else. But I do not wish to see the development crowd use devolution, the desirability of a return to republican government and a greater measure of community control, as a cover for the rape of the natural West and the destruction of the Western way of life that would inevitably follow it.

Has the environmental movement, by demanding and creating regulatory law from the federal and state governments, played a part in undermining state and community control and affecting and altering Western institutions? Is it fair to say that environmentalism is fundamentally undemocratic in its mode of operation?

EM: Well, yes, but that was last year's environmental movement. This year's new improved movement is moving toward a more local approach. What I see and write about more and more are environmentalists who understand that the solutions must be implemented at the local level. But, I believe, these solutions must fall within the boundaries set by national values. The West was built, and damaged, by the national values in force in the late 19th and first half of the 20th century: values that put industrial and urban development above everything. Now the nation has moved on, leaving parts of the West—especially the sincere Wise Use and custom-and-culture folks—feeling (how many times have I heard it?) like the Last Americans. Give me a break.

I do not think environmentalism is antidemocratic. I would say that by going national with public lands issues, it is being democratic by expanding the circle of those who have a say in public lands management. (Though environmentalism, by doing that, is helping to create an unworkable situation.) Community control cannot be used as a blanket that can cover any sins local people wish to perpetrate. Only when the nation at large feels secure in how local people will deal with resources can local control become a reality. At the same time, urban people have to be more realistic about what happens when you work with nature.

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CW: You say: "Only when the nation at large feels secure in how local people will deal with resources can local control become a reality." But you are working backward here. The 13 states under the Articles of Confederation created the federal government and made it responsible to them. Power in America is supposed to flow from the small governmental units to the larger ones, not the reverse. Therefore, I would rephrase your statement to read, "Only when local people feel secure in how the nation at large will deal with resources should federal control become a reality."

Of course, environmentalists, like social and civil rights workers, corporations, and other nationally minded groups and organizations, have a preference for the nationalist approach, which requires them to convince only one entity—the federal leviathan—of the desirability of their programs and goals. The central government may then allow the states and local communities to "implement" decisions imposed on them arbitrarily by Washington, D.C. But how this process can be described as "democracy," let alone "community control," is beyond me. The same goes for "solutions" devised and implemented by "national values." What about Western, New England, and Southern values? And why should the increasingly abstract and homogenized culture of the Beltway be free to determine what is and is not a "sin" in Birmingham, Alabama, or Portland, Oregon? Incidentally, Frederick Jackson Turner probably would have agreed with today's traditional Westerners that they are the Last Americans, since, according to his frontier thesis, they *were* the Real Americans.

EM: You describe the environmental conflict as one between a centralized federal government and local communities. I see it as a conflict between certain Western communities that use natural resources, on the one hand, and other just-as-local communities elsewhere in the United States. These other local communities—acting through the federal government—want to change how the West uses the commonly owned natural resources. If there were not real people in America who cared about the West, the federal government would not be a problem for natural resource users. The situation will persist until urban environmentalists gain a more sophisticated understanding of how things happen on the ground and until rural people understand that, in fighting against the very idea of environmentalism, they are acting like the South did in the pre-Civil Rights days.

CW: The federal government had no constitutional justification for imposing most forms of desegregation on the South—certainly not in the states' educational systems. Even so, the 14th Amendment says nothing about equal rights for trees, cacti, ecosystems, and wolves. But Washington has attempted to use environmentalism to further its control over the Western (and indeed every other) region, as it used civil rights to consolidate the megastate in the 1950's, 60's, and 70's, and abolitionism in the antebellum period to gain the economic and political supremacy of the Northern states over the Southern ones.

Should environmentalists take "custom and culture" into account in pushing their reforms, and, if so, to what extent?

EM: Environmentalists definitely ought to take custom and culture into account. It enrages me when I hear environmentalists say, "So what if some loggers or miners lose their jobs—look at all the people who lost their jobs in the steel mills, or in Detroit." Or they say, "Let them pour cappuccino." They applaud the workings of the economic machine when it destroys values they do not care about, and fight it when it says, "Kill that forest! Build that dam!" So yes, environmentalists ought to fight to preserve the West's traditional values. And I think that our general attitude toward those values has not been very well informed. We did not see what was at stake. We did not see what was going to replace the Old West. We thought of the Old West as incredibly powerful; we felt it was going to persist forever. And then, suddenly, like the Berlin Wall, but more quietly, and over a longer period of time, it crumbled.

It crumbled because it was built on a rotten foundation. The rot in the Old West's foundation was the fact that it did not protect and preserve the region's environmental health and quality. It did not look to the future and ensure that not just the beaver and the easily mined gold would last for a long time, but that the grass and forests and streams and wildlife and clean air would remain as well.

Environmentalism could help bring back the Old West: in its loyalty to the land and its resources, environmentalism is actually truer to the land-based traditions of the West than the custom-and-culture crowd is. The trouble is, environmentalists have acted at times as an invading army, insensitive to the people who have lived here for generations or to people with different values. Rather than seek to change people, we have tended to use lawsuits and political clout exclusively. And that has been a mistake.

But the hopeless part of the custom-and-culture group is that they do not want to be part of America. They are appalled by America. They despise urban values, and see themselves as dwelling in a fortress that will protect them and their children from those destructive forces. I lived for 33 years in and around New York City, and I have lived for 21 years in a small rural town. Both are wonderful places, but neither has a hammerlock on virtue or brains or morality or, especially, on broad thinking. Each has a piece of the picture, and each needs the other, not just for markets and specialized services and recreating space, but for the particular view each has of how the world works. The custom-and-culture view of rural, small-town society as superior to that of the city, and the city's view of the countryside as being incompetent to protect natural resources, are simply flip sides of the same xenophobic coin.

The need is for the West to become cosmopolitan: to become open to a variety of influences, without abandoning the wonderful customs and cultures that make the West the West. Not to reduce everything to dollars and cents, but when a community does not understand the outside world, it dooms itself in many ways, but certainly economically. A few years ago, for example, the ranchers here came up with a slogan that they used for their advertising: BEEF BUILDS STRENGTH. That slogan came out of their experience, but it was not going to have much appeal to urbanites. The OJ guys down in Florida shoot themselves in the foot over and over again in the same way, choosing "spokesmen" like Anita Bryant who irritate urban sensibilities. I am not saying they should not love Anita Bryant; I am saying they should not spend their hard-earned dollars on advertising that chases away customers.

CW: You say the custom-and-culture people do not want to be part of America. Well, in the same sense, neither do I; and neither, you said earlier, do you. In fact, you mentioned seeing the West as a refuge from America.

In my experience, rural people have at least as great a famil-

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iarity with urban reality and values as urban ones have with rural life. Again, much of what they—the urbanites—know of the West and of country living comes from television; most recently, from *Northern Exposure* which, while a clever show in its way, has nothing whatever to do with Alaska, Alaskans, or Alaskan life. As for urban values *per se*, urbanites by the hundreds of thousands are rejecting those values. What else is the great California migration about? After all, the values of contemporary New York City or Los Angeles are not the values Dr. Johnson praised when he said that the man who is tired of London is tired of life.

Can the West become more cosmopolitan than it is without ceasing to be the West? I have nothing at all against cosmopolitanism, but why must everything be run together? What is wrong with the existence of more or less discrete cultural areas (called "regions" or "countries"), each with its unique strengths and weaknesses? Would anyone seriously consider trying to make New York City more like Catron County or Amarillo, Texas? I am thinking here of what Josiah Royce called the "higher provincialism."

And why do you say that small Western communities are "outside the world"? They—with every other locality around the globe—*are* the world. Granted, they have little knowledge—and, for the most part, no experience—of one another. But have they ever? And could they really? Television gives us a sense of familiarity with the rest of the country, and the world beyond it, that is completely false. If the health of local economies depended upon an understanding of the world, then there would be no local economies.

Regarding the relationship between Western cities and rural areas, between urban and rural culture in the West, what is the probable future?

EM: I see three things rural areas need to do, as a result of the ongoing decline of the economies and ecosystems on which their ways of life rested. First, figure out how to be economically useful to urban areas; second, figure out how to attract the right kind of urban people to rural places, and then integrate them into rural life; and, third, figure out what the core rural values are, and see how they can be conserved. The first requires that rural people learn about urban places, because that is the market. Today, you cannot serve a market you do not understand or may even despise. One example is the BEEF BUILDS STRENGTH slogan I referred to earlier. A prime example of how to do it right is provided by Doc and Connie Hatfield and their Oregon Natural Beef Co-op. Their co-op made a lot of money in 1995 despite a bad cattle market because they understand and communicate with urban people. They have not given up their rural values and way of life, but neither do they find it necessary to spit in the faces of their customers.

CW: My fear is that the metastasizing cities here may eventually dominate rural areas completely. Already the populations of the big Western cities are at least half non-Western in origin, and soon they will be two-thirds or three-quarters so. These are the same people who will buy vacation property in scenic areas surrounding these cities, and pretty soon they will control the rural as well as the urban West. And what is known as the "urban West" is, anyway, pretty much simply an extension of the suburban America that you and I dislike, but that makes up nearly all of America but the small towns and the inner cities.

My friend Catron believes that the traditional Western way of life will convert these people to Western values. I am not so sure. There are simply too many people coming in from elsewhere in too short a space of time to make this likely. Many of these people, liking the country—the "wilderness"—they see beyond the cities, will wish to "preserve" it, according to their understanding of the term, and become, not custom-and-culture advocates, but environmentalists, opposed to the traditional Western rural economy, its culture and people. In Utah, for instance, most of the support for more wilderness comes from the urbanized (suburbanized), recently arrived population of the Salt Lake Valley; elsewhere in the state, the voters oppose it. So what I am talking about has already happened in Utah. Therefore, the rural West seems to me to be threatened with the removal of its traditional population through environmentalist lockups and lockouts, and their replacement by recreationists and environmentalist managers.

EM: I do not know that traditional people will be forced out of the region, but they will be marginalized economically and socially. And the result of that marginalization was on display in the 1994 election, when the "War on the West" rhetoric of the Western Republicans convinced people to vote their way overwhelmingly.

By my values, it would not be healthy to replace traditional communities and people with recreationists and lone eagles working their computers out of their hillside homes. But it is what is happening, and so long as we remain locked in this destructive "wise use" versus "environmentalist" debate, it is going to continue happening. And in the end, the wise use/custom-and-culture people will be totally marginalized, and we modern, urban types will rule over a region that will have lost both its ecological and social value; it will be like the rest of America.

CW: You offer hope with the suggestion that if environmentalists and "wise users" could reconcile their differences, we might be able to salvage some of the old, unique West. I would feel better about the possibilities for that if I did not suspect, with Alston Chase, that environmentalism is ultimately not about nature at all, but rather recreating human society according to a hackneyed, progressivist vision.

EM:Those who say that environmentalists use resource issues simply to impose progressive values have it backwards. Environmentalists care first and last about the land. But the only tools they know to protect the land with are so-called progressive tools: regulation through a strong federal government, lots of paper-driven process, lawsuits in federal courts, and so on. As environmentalism has matured, we have begun to see the possibilities of market-based solutions, local control, and the like. Our fear in abandoning big government doesn't come out of a love of big government. It comes out of the fear that without big government, we will be at the mercy of those who would destroy the West.

Alston Chase and the Wise Users are engaging in Red Baiting against environmentalists in order to avoid the issue that created environmentalism: the degraded state of the West as a natural place. That is the hurdle they cannot leap. And big government as a security blanket is the hurdle we environmentalists cannot leap. Each of us, unable to confront our fears and blind spots, therefore demonizes the other.

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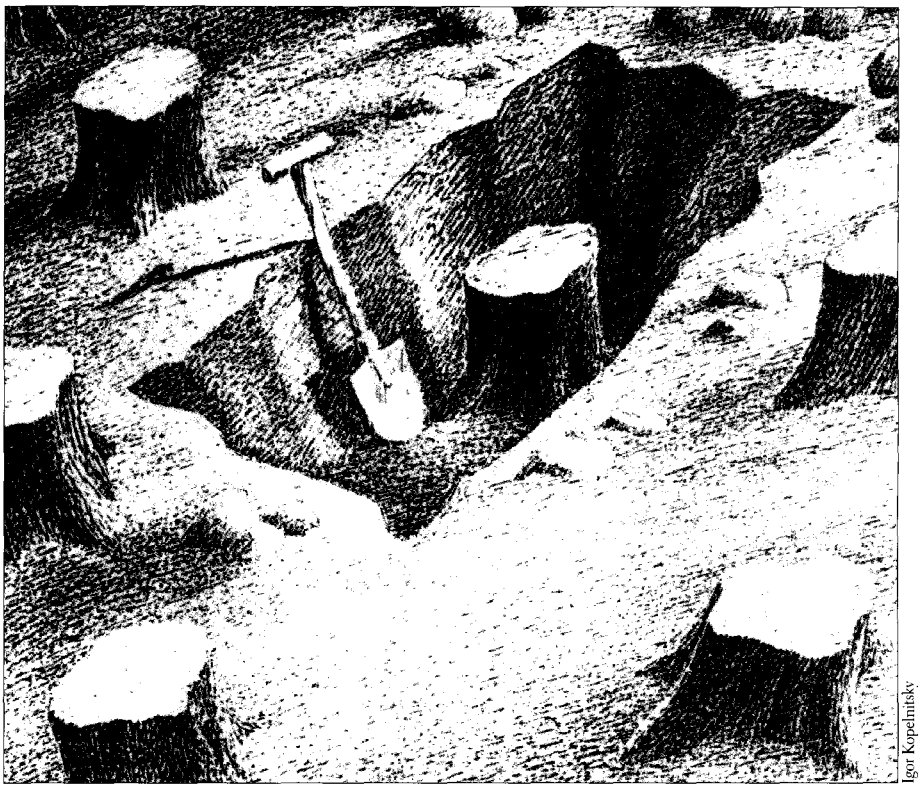
Lilliput vs. Leviathan

by James Catron



Igor Kopelnitsky

There are lots of freckles, red hair, and Celtic names in Catron County, New Mexico. Though almost everyone in the county has some Indian or Mexican blood, this is home to the families and culture which David Hackett Fischer describes in *Albion's Seed* as Scotch-Irish, double distilled, first by the Highland clearances and then by transportation from Ireland. The culture was distilled again by Reconstruction Era acts of attainder that outlawed their Confederate and Copperhead ancestors and drove them further West.

As insular as their British forbearers, these folk mined, logged, and ranched in their mountain fastness quite happily for over a century. The only high school in the county calls its teams the Mountaineers, and its mascot is a bearded, corncob-piped, peak-hatted Appalachian hillbilly. The county is so remote that in the past it served as refuge to renegades and badmen like Mangas Coloradas (Red Sleeves), who acquired the name by bathing his arms in the blood of Spanish colonists he had killed. Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid hid out there for a while, and Billy the Kid frequented Frisco, today's Reserve, the county seat.

Life was never idyllic in Catron County; it required hard work, thrift, and grit to survive in a place where 85 percent of its 7,800 square miles is held by the federal government. It was the land that drew them in the first place. In the last century, the West was held by land barons, American and foreign, who ruthlessly defended their enormous claims. Congress enacted the Homestead Laws to break up such power. Anyone could stake claim to 40 or, much later, 640 acres, but in the arid West, such small plots would not feed your family. To settle, to pacify the West, the federal government offered the acreage, plus all the surrounding pasture your cattle could eat, limited only by the number of cows you could water. Enticed by such bait, people came.

But the homesteading ended in Catron County when Congress passed, from 1891 to 1906, a series of Forest Reserve laws. One could not homestead on lands the feds reserved to themselves, ostensibly withdrawn from the public to "protect the watersheds and to assure a steady supply of timber to the nation." In reality, these laws protected Eastern timber companies from competition with the vast timber resources of the West.

At the beginning of the century, ranchers all over the West began to petition the central government to create a permit system to protect their grazing rights from transient sheep and cattle drovers. They got what they asked for, a system of prioritized classes of permits that imposed a nominal grazing tax. Soon, someone in Washington, D.C., realized that taxes are imposed only on property rights, and the grazing tax was changed quietly and slyly to a grazing "fee." This treachery greatly undercuts grazing rights claims made now, 90 years later.

But no one really noticed the difference, or noticed when Congress created the Aldo Leopold-Gila Wilderness in the big, beautiful county. No one really noticed all the hippies coming to worship Mother Earth on altars inside the Catron County line. Nonetheless, the people of Catron County lived in relative peace with the United States government for decades until

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the environmentalist and consumerist awakening of the 1970's, when Congress passed a series of statutes designed to protect and clean the natural environment, including FLPMA, the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act.

This innocuous sounding law greatly expanded federal land management missions and budgets and staffs. It, combined with the Supreme Court's decision in *Kleppe* v. *New Mexico*, changed the central government from a mere proprietor of huge tracts of the West, subject to state regulation, into the governing power of those lands. And with this change in legal status came hordes of federal bureaucrats with degrees in biology and earth sciences and with eco-agendas. Most had no connection to the West, to rural cultures, or to production of food, fiber, or minerals. To the contrary, many brought to their power and position real enmity toward rural Western producers.

Thus the stage was set for the drama of recent years. The protagonists are a local culture that for historical reasons distrusts government and despises absentee landlords, but values production from the land; a central bureaucracy hell-bent to make war on production and freedom in the name of environmental and consumer protection; and a tiny, radical pack of anarcho-hippies who advocate the murder of loggers by spiking trees, determined to set up the other two actors for mortal combat. There are subplots as well. The Forest Service had watched helplessly as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grabbed the power to manage Northwestern National Forests in the guise of protecting the Northern Spotted Owl, a gambit aided and abetted by FWS allies in the Audubon Society-Sierra Club-Wilderness Society axis.

Worried that the latter move was afoot in New Mexico and Arizona, the U.S. Forest Service in 1990 promulgated Interim Guidelines protecting the Mexican Spotted Owl (and thereby protecting its own power to manage the Southwestern forests). Unfortunately, the Forest Service failed to perform the full socioeconomic impact studies required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and thus could not predict the economic devastation its plan immediately wreaked upon Catron County's logging industry and its society.

In reaction, the Catron County Commission began passing a series of county ordinances based on federal laws, designed to remind Forest Service employees of their legal duties and responsibilities to protect local cultures and economies. The agents responded badly, and a federal attorney sent a letter threatening to jail the county commission. When reminded that his letter violated the commissioners' civil rights, he politely requested the return of his letter. The green advocacy groups and the national media likewise went into hysterics, and Catron County was painted as ignorant, violent, and redneck by CNN, TBS, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Good Morning America*, the Sierra Club, the state attorney general, etc.

In the midst of this mud throwing and screaming, the county commission quietly passed a series of environmental protection ordinances, miniature NEPAs. It did so because federal regulations and NEPA recognize and protect both the biophysical and socioeconomic environments. They also recognize the fact the local governments have the power to pass laws for environmental protection, and that those local laws may duplicate federal efforts. Because local government has such powers, federal agents are mandated to cooperate, coordinate, and jointly plan with counties.

This second generation of ordinances was deliberately designed to provide the maximum duplication of federal planning, thus acquiring, by federal law and regulations, a local voice in federal planning, a place at the table. Other county governments in the West have tried to cut right to the root by engineering lawsuits that challenge the federal government's right to own the Western lands. So far, these efforts have been kamikaze-like, bold and showy, but ineffective and self-destructive.

> The 2,500 people of Catron County, New Mexico, have proven that rogue federal agents are vulnerable and that the judiciary still can fulfill its role.

Our approach has been attacked in federal court by the local environmental-extremist group, which claimed that the ordinances created an atmosphere of violence and intimidation that chilled their free exercise of civil rights. The federal judge dismissed the suit, saying that his court could not enjoin the residents of Catron County from disliking environmental activists. He ruled that the group had no standing until its members had been arrested for violation of county ordinances. The leader of the pack immediately presented herself to the sheriff demanding to be arrested; her argument sounded as though it had been carefully reasoned out by Tommy Smothers.

On another front, the county commission filed suit in 1993 against the FWS for blatant defiance of the NEPA. In 1985, the FWS proposed to list as threatened two minnow species found in the Gila River of New Mexico and Arizona. In the same published rules, it proposed the designation of critical habitat for the minnows. FWS agents had decided that they ought to be exempt from NEPA, and so prepared no Environmental Assessments, no Environmental Impact Statements, nothing. After a delay of seven years, FWS agents determined to adopt recovery plans for the fish without ever designating the habitat as required by the Endangered Species Act. The plan basically was to remove all cattle from the Gila drainage, which would drive the final nail in the coffin of Catron County's economy and tax base.

The commissioners filed a federal lawsuit asking the judge to enjoin those federal agents' implementation and enforcement of the final critical habitat designation, unless and until those agents comply with NEPA, the Administrative Procedures Act, and the Endangered Species Act. The federal district judge ruled against the FWS and all the environmentalists who had filed briefs. Catron County had won a stunning victory in its battle for a place at the table, a voice in its own future.

But the agents did not give up, did not accept the rule of law, and did not invite us to the table. They appealed to the Tenth

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Circuit Court of Appeals, where eventually the county again was upheld. The decision stands as a legal precedent for property owners to bring assaults against every critical habitat designation in the country. It was another victory for elected local government against the unelected bureaucracy that devours freedoms; but, still, we received no concession, no admission, and no admittance. If the recalcitrant agents of the government appeal to the Supreme Court, they gamble having a direct order to obey the law all over America, not just inside the Tenth Circuit.

The 2,500 people of Catron County, New Mexico, have proven that rogue federal agents are vulnerable and that the judiciary still can fulfill its role. Hundreds of counties, throughout the United States, are emulating us, and demanding that bureaucrats honor local government's right to be involved in federal environmental planning. For example, the Arizona-New Mexico Coalition of Counties was built around Catron County and its ideas, literally and figuratively. It is now five years old and includes counties that cover half of each state and 900,000 citizens.

The Forest Service has capitulated and entered a Memorandum of Understanding with the county, fleshing out the details of our joint and mutual planning efforts. It has sent it to all the District Forest Rangers in America with instructions to execute the same MOU with the counties in their districts. The agents are slowly and grudgingly complying.

Whether petty tyrants comply or resist, several questions remain unanswered. When will the national media stop their assaults on our ancient and honorable culture? When will multicultural diversity make room for us? When will the legislature or the courts create a mechanism whereby unelected government agents will be disciplined for deliberately and flagrantly disregarding, defying, disobeying, and violating the law of the land and the rule of law?

The answers to such questions may be beyond the reach of tiny Catron County, New Mexico. Or maybe not. We have founded the Catron Institute, for the study and defense of the rural culture of Western America. This country is full of thinkers, planners, philosophers, and whiners. Catron County is full of doers. <c>

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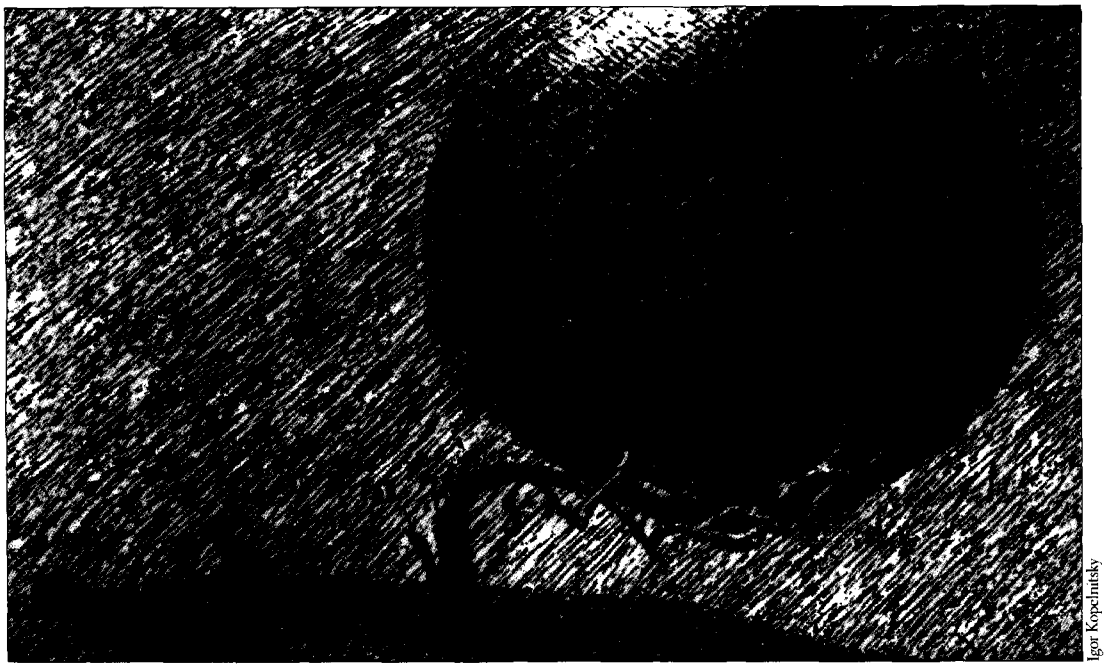
Conservatives and Environmentalists

Allies, Not Enemies

by John C. Vinson, Jr.



Igor Kopelnitsky

Conservatives and environmentalists generally have as much in common as the Hatfields and McCoys. Environmentalists like to point to the career of conservative James Watt and the comment of Ronald Reagan that once you've seen one redwood you've seen them all. Most conservatives, on the other hand, view environmentalists as sentimental anti-modernists who want to take us back to living in teepees.

Despite the apparent polarity, there are good reasons for conservatives to be concerned about the environment—reasons that go beyond GOP election strategies. Through the ages, a prominent strand of conservative thought has been love of the land and attachment to the soil. In Europe and the United States, the small farmer and the landed country gentleman are archtypical conservative figures who sense the changeless cycles of the seasons and regard man as the partner, not the master, of nature. From my own observation, it is the desire for these same intangibles that prompts the average environmentalist toward the wilderness, away from the arrogant sophistries and passing sensations of modern urban living.

Another common interest of both groups is an abiding concern for future generations. If most environmentalists were only interested in their own enjoyment of the wilderness, they could relax and forget political action. Not even 100 James Watts could destroy all the wilderness in one lifetime. Thus when they take action, it is likely to be for the sake of lifetimes to come.

Yet, as a devil's advocate might inquire, why should anyone care for the unborn? Here the modern environmentalist would do well to heed the conservative's affirmation that individuals can never achieve their full humanity as islands in time. Such fulfillment comes only when they join past and future by seeing themselves as temporary actors in the ongoing drama of generations.

As Edmund Burke observed, "People will not look forward to posterity, who do not look backward to their ancestors." We commune with our ancestors through tradition, the living wisdom of experience; through ethnic and national heritage, the wisdom of the group; and through religion, which orients all generations toward purposes of eternity. The affectionate memory of past generations will inspire those now living to love and guard their descendants. Environmentalists are right to care for the future, and traditional conservatism gives this sentiment a firm rationale.

The key nexus in the progress of the generations is the family. Unfortunately, some environmentalists have made common political cause with radical feminists, gay activists, and other groups which have, at the very least, a bias against the family. Whether anyone likes it or not, there is no convincing alternative to the family unit as an institution for forming the character of the young by weaning them away from their chaotic and destructive impulses. If the connection between environmental protection and personal character is not evident, failure to grasp the significance of character has led some environmentalists to think that passing more laws is sufficient to protect nature. Laws may well be needed, but these environmentalists are mistaken if they conceive the state to be God-like and its laws self-enforcing. Much closer to the mark is Thomas Jefferson's insight that laws are rarely more effective than the personal discipline and law-abiding habits of leaders and the mass of citizenry.

Environmentalists, of all people, should be aware of this

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point, as often it is their oversight and determination alone that prevent vested interests from evading the clear intent of environmental laws. If the criminal element reigns supreme, laws will be of little avail, as is the case in some African countries where poaching is rampant.

Several years ago, while I was visiting Georgia's Okefenokee Wildlife Refuge, a resident told me how the alligators of the refuge once faced extinction from poachers. What saved them, he said, was the single-minded determination of one park ranger who, at some risk to himself, put the poachers to flight. Merely doing the minimum to collect his paycheck would not have saved the gators. Something extra motivated him.

> But despite their differences, both real and imagined, the genuine conservative and the genuine environmentalist share piety toward the same natural order, and love of the land. Here they stand together on common ground.

And whether that same something is present in millions of other people will determine the fate of the environment. Consider, for example, a group of teenagers in a car. Will they carry their empty beer bottles home, or follow the easier course of tossing them out the window? Will a pesticide manufacturer act to delay production of a pesticide because of misgivings about its safety—especially if the letter of the law would allow him to produce it and delay would cost him money? Will a farmer employ sound conservation practices on his land, even though they may be unprofitable in the short run? Will backpackers make the effort to leave the wilderness as they found it? Laws can guide these decisions, but only character can provide the strength to resist temptation to despoil.

True, much that passes for conservatism today is more concerned with cash than character, possessions more than posterity. Its only close attachment to the land is on the fairway and the putting green at the country club. Environmental activists rightly despise this type of conservatism, but the reason it is despicable is that it really isn't conservative.

When 19th-century conservatives overreacted to the rise of their socialist and communist foes and embraced "rugged individualism" and the quest for personal gain, they forgot that character, personhood, and true individuality will never flower without the nurture of community. More than a few conservatives concluded that Big Business—even unsavory monopoly interests spouting Social Darwinism—could do no wrong. Robber barons returned the favor by calling their greed conservatism.

With "conservatism" monopolized by monopolists, genuine conservative sentiment cast about for a means of expression. One was the Populist movement, which tried to protect the independent farmer and rural economy. Among its spiritual descendants are the "social issue" conservatives who sit in uneasy alliance with the corporate faction of the Republican coalition. Other populists reacted so strongly against "conservative" vested interests that they articulated their concerns in socialist rhetoric. Many of the socialist-leaning members of today's environmental camp are part of this reaction. They are mistaken, however, if they think that community can be restored through a planned economy. It is tainted as much by sterile materialism and ambition as monopoly capitalism. Far from being opposites, both plutocrat and planner try to monopolize wealth and power. Thus when we see Big Business "conservatives" struggle with Big Government "liberals," we merely witness a tangle of tentacles belonging to the same predatory Establishment.

One of many depressing examples of government-corporate collusion was the sale of advanced technology to the former Soviet Union, some of it with direct application to nuclear weaponry. Pure greed may be one explanation, but the mutual affinity of monopolists, American and Soviet, could have been another. In any case, concern for the environment or future generations was never an issue.

Clearly, it is imperative for genuine conservatives and environmentalists to unite for their common goal. This is not to minimize real differences between the two groups, but both need to exchange ideas and arguments to overcome these barriers.

Conservatives might listen to an environmentalist plea to modify their view of property rights. Specifically, the heirs of Burke and Jefferson might expand their notion of these rights to protect not only real estate, but also lungs and livers. The point is that uncontrolled industrial pollution is as deadly to conservatives as anyone else. The rights on a plot of ground are not worth much if it is the plot where you are buried.

On the other hand, environmentalists should look past the rhetorical excesses of the Christian right to see legitimate concerns of religious conservatives. The former need not share the latter's religion to share the conservative's misgivings about drugs, violence, and licentiousness. Admittedly, bringing God into the equation is controversial, but it is necessary to do, for to plunder the environment is to place ego above Creation and even the Creator. The religious sentiment commonly confirmed by the conservative is a needed corrective toward humility and reverence. Its moral teachings prompt stewardship over the land and its fauna and flora and concern for the well-being of others, not the least of which are future generations.

Patriotism is another conservative force for the environment, for a man will surely think twice before injuring what he regards as his Fatherland and Motherland. Of course scoundrels have used patriotism as a cloak for warmongering and other vile aims. But what good name haven't scoundrels used and abused? The attachment to our native land is a deep and primal tie; to forsake it is to be outcast and alienated.

One cause both conservatives and environmentalists should support is the protection and revival of the family farm. Jefferson hailed it as a school of character where discipline, strong ties of kin, and healthful living would produce good citizens.

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He doubted that a highly urban society could impart the virtues necessary to maintain a free Republic. Once again, Jefferson had greater faith in character than constitutions. The Southern agrarian prophets of *I'll Take My Stand* echoed Jefferson and predicted 50 years ago with uncanny accuracy the social and psychological malaise that would result in a wholesale flight to the city. Wendell Berry, in recent years, has sounded a similar theme.

The family farm today is moving toward extinction, a trend that should be of utmost concern to environmentalists. How futile it would be to protect parcels of wilderness and parks if the vastly larger tracts that feed us are stripped of fertility by wind, water, and human abuse. Moreover, environmentalists often forget that family farmers have as an incentive for using their land wisely the desire to pass it on to future generations; corporate farming is not so motivated.

A revival of rural community is a task that will require something better conceived than the failed back-to-the-land movement of the 60's communalists. Nevertheless, one detects among many Americans a deep yearning to escape the sterility of the urban secular city; to escape paper-shuffling jobs for genuinely satisfying labor; and to escape the fantasies of video-addiction for a truly human life lived firsthand. Society desperately needs the perspective of a self-reliant rural class, with its knowledge of nature and her workings.

Rural revival will require hardheaded economic and political appraisal. Tax breaks for current family farms and for individuals wishing to enter farming should be expanded; new strategies for finance, cooperation, and marketing must be instituted. Until these and other changes come about, the full-time family farm will be a difficult proposition. However, opportunities for part-time farming may open up with the advent of home-based computer work and other types of long-distance employment to supplement incomes. Finding ways back to our homesteads could be the next chapter in our saga as a nation of pioneers.

Time will doubtless reveal other areas for conservative-environmental cooperation. As a conservative, I have never understood why some in my camp miss the profound but basic connection between a respect for nature and conservatism. If we are not conserving the natural grandeur of the nation and the nature that sustains us, then what are we conserving? Similarly, it is hard to understand why some environmentalists lean toward varieties of leftist thinking which strain and mold life into tight ideological dogmas. Nothing could be so foreign to the rich, organic vitality of nature.

But despite their differences, both real and imagined, the genuine conservative and the genuine environmentalist share piety toward the same natural order, and love of the land. Here they stand together on common ground. c

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Love song of the modern woman to her partner

by PJ Martyr

There'll be no masculine nonsense,
Nor feminine yielding of self.
This arrangement's based purely upon sense,
And business, and fashion, and wealth.
Our bodies well-sealed against children,
We'll advocate freedom to think
That babes must be wanted, and if, when,
As long as they're our shade of pink.
Our lives secured safe against upsets,
Our minds will be filled with debris.
I insist upon separate sunsets—
In modern love, nothing is free.

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To end Federal interference with imposition of the death penalty for capital crimes,
To fully safeguard the Bill of Rights, including rights of property, speech, religion, and the right to keep and bear arms,
To terminate Federal funding for Planned Parenthood, AIDS education, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Legal Services Corporation, and all forms of ideological advocacy,
To close down the Federal Department of Education and restore local and parental authority by terminating the Federal role in education,
To restore unconstitutional Federal holdings to the states and the people,
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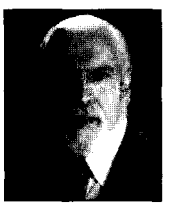
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USTP National Convention Schedule

Thursday, August 15	Friday, August 16	Saturday, August 17	Sunday, August 18
Platform Hearings	*Platform, Rules and Credentials Committees Meet*	*Adoption of Platform, President and Vice President Nominations*	*Acceptance Speeches*

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Decline and Fall

by Herbert London

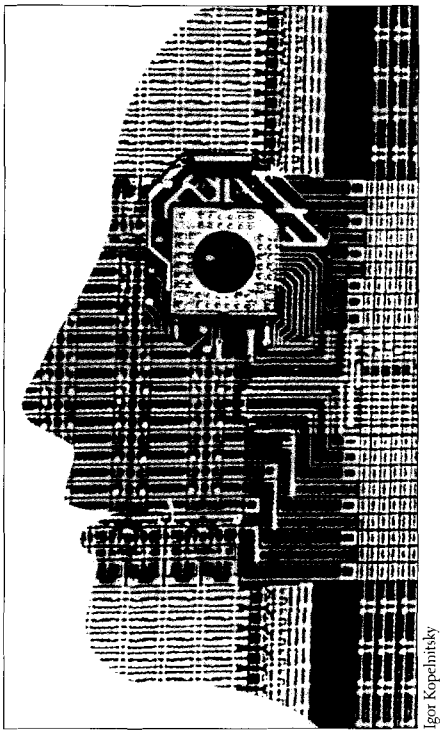
"The true university these days is a collection of books."
—Thomas Carlyle

The Price of Excellence: Universities in Conflict During the Cold War Era
by Jacob Neusner and Noam M.M. Neusner
New York: Continuum; 252 pp., $24.95

◆

When Woodrow Wilson left his position as president of Princeton University to run for governor of New Jersey, a reporter asked him why he would voluntarily give up his prestigious position for a life of public service. Wilson hesitated for a moment, and then said, "To get out of politics." While many who hear this story laugh, the punch line has a certain poignancy. Both meanings of politics in the academy—the petty, mean-spirited variety and a dedication to public activity—are explicated with extraordinary judgment by Jacob and Noam Neusner in *The Price of Excellence: Universities in Conflict During the Cold War Era*.

The son (Noam) offers the story of the evolving university from the end of World War II to the present, and the father (Jacob) weaves his personal story of accomplishment and disappointment into the fabric of the whole. What one gets from this book is a university saga that includes insulation and exclusiveness, public awareness and largess, democratization and eventually the vitiation of standards. It is hardly surprising in reading this work to find that as universities have altered their undertaking from teaching and research to redressing the wrongs of the past and serving as a



Igor Kopelnitsky

catalyst for social change, public appreciation for the academy and its mission has declined. While a significant portion of the public could readily identify the purpose of higher education and its manifest results in the not very distant past, public attitudes today vary from mildly respectful to confused, with the typical response being, "Why is so much spent, for so little purpose?"

Alas, scholarship itself is the victim of politicization. Most scholarly positions are filtered through a cauldron of race, sex, class, and Third World ideology. When ideas are not considered within this orthodoxy, they are moved into a relativistic cosmology in which one opinion is as good as another. Is it any wonder that legislatures considering the funding for public colleges and universities often conclude that the value of learning such as it is may not be self-evident?

From the metaphorical ivory tower—institutions insulated from politics—the university has moved into the eye of the Washington hurricane. Once the campus became a battlefield for the Cold War, political intrusion became inevitable. Science and technology were mobilized for warfare, and Washington seduced professors with bounty worthy of Croesus. As the authors note: "Politics . . . governs learning; universities form an instrument in achieving the national will; and the shape and goal of scholarship for professors and of education for students . . . find their definition in that same consensus that dictates public policy for all else."

Government blandishments were too appealing to deny. Instead of pursuing pure knowledge and abstract questions, the university allowed itself incrementally to become a center for practical knowledge and problem-solving. There were few limits on resources of any kind. The Neusners describe this period in the 1950's as the "golden age." Yet the money came with strings, and the politics, serious academics now lament, found its way into an academy that had heretofore resisted such incursions.

Jacob Neusner has had an academic career that spans the Cold War to the present. He found his métier at Harvard as an undergraduate and at Columbia as a graduate student through his intense interest in all things Jewish. For Neusner, there was no achievement higher than learning. His passion for scholarship shines through every sentence in this book. His love of Jewishness is not simply ethnic rejoicing, although he takes great pride in his background. His affection for Jewish history, law, fiction, language, and theology is rather a reflection of his immersion in scholarship, an affection, as he notes, which sometimes created tension with his colleagues at the Jewish Theological Seminary and later at Brown University.

Herbert London is John M. Olin Professor of Humanities at New York University and author, with Ed Rubenstein, of From the Empire State to the Vampire State: New York in a Downward Transition.

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Jacob Neusner does not mince words. Critics might confuse his unimpeachable standards with high dudgeon, but, in fact, his judgment about people and places with which I am familiar is impeccable, and his courage in the face of petty criticism admirable. I should note for the record that I was a student at Columbia when Neusner was there; I studied with his advisor Morton Smith, and I even lived on the same street (113th Street) in the year (1961) he resided there. But to my knowledge, we did not meet. After reading this book, that is my regret.

This book does have its flaws. Columbia, for example, did not provide the "first great spectacle" of student rebellion in 1968. That occurred four years earlier at Berkeley with the Free Speech Movement. And the University of Chicago was less insulated from student rebellion than the authors assume. There are also occasional lapses in syntax. On balance, however, these are niggling concerns. What stands out in this volume is the integrity of the authors, the plaintive plea for high standards in an institution overrun by relativism, mediocrity, petty jealousies, and radical egalitarianism. I never thought a professor would have the temerity to say—as Jacob Neusner does—that "universities work best under benign dictatorships, and, as the next decades were to teach me, they fall apart under mob rule, especially that of the common professors." After having spent more than three decades in the academy, I am convinced Professor Neusner is right. Yet seeing these words in print is startling nonetheless.

When Professor Neusner relocated from Dartmouth to Brown, he entered his new academic home at precisely the moment radical egalitarianism had reached its apogee, and grading, in the febrile minds of youthful avatars, was a conspiracy to foster class stratification. *Soi disant* revolutionaries managed to convince a browbeaten faculty that undifferentiated grades were fair and course requirements retrograde. Professors made peace with what they should have contested. And administrators cowed by student contentiousness acquiesced to almost every demand as "no trouble on my watch" became—with rare exceptions—the administrative calling-card.

Into the avalanche of academic corruption stepped Professor Neusner. He was in the minority opposing the Maganiner Report on academic reform at Brown (the same Maganiner who attempted to engineer the Clinton national health care plan: fortunately, the American public is more astute than the Brown faculty). He refused to compromise his scholarly pursuits when he was accused of "doing too much," rate-busting among faculty members accustomed to teaching nine hours a week. And his faith in the standard of reason and the rationale of skepticism and "self-criticism for all" remained unwavering. Neusner writes, "I like to think that I was an equal opportunity critic."

Goaded by the elimination of grades, a liberalization of admissions requirements, and a conquering belief that all opinions have validity, Neusner was driven to write a commencement speech that converted him into an international celebrity, and with 580 words he seared the collective memory at Brown, deploring the surrender of the academy to the demands of spoiled kids and the extent to which professors praised marginal student performance. Although he was now a pariah, excoriated by his colleagues and criticized by Brown's president, Neusner had displayed yet again his unequivocal dedication to scholarship and idiosyncratic courage in a sea of pusillanimity. His days at Brown were effectively over. He blew the whistle on a great academic fraud, and those with a stake in the system could not let him get away with it.

Accelerating the shift in academic life described by the Neusners was the demographic trend of the 1980's. With the pool of students available for colleges declining significantly, selectivity could not be sustained. During this period, I liked to say that if a student passed the feather test—that is to say, if he blew upon a feather and it moved—a college could be found to accommodate his talent, or lack thereof. With students on all manner of university committees, "decisions found definition in mere personal opinion, then prejudice, and finally bigotry." The Neusners contend that when academic achievement was no longer valued, the golden age (if there ever was one) had come to an end. "It is the end of the wish to excel, resulting in the leveling of the academy," Jacob Neusner reflects.

In their conclusion, the Neusners ask, "Why concentrate on the university's unique union of research and teaching?" If the case can no longer be made for the academy in its present form, market conditions will demand change. Signs of that are already on the horizon, what with courses on the Internet and widespread public discontent with colleges and universities.

Renewal depends upon facing squarely the challenges of the moment. In a recent article about Duke University in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, a student says, "The lack of intellectual focus here makes people more approachable," while in another article, a professor contends that academic civility is an oxymoron. An AAUP study reports that "many junior faculty want new criteria for granting tenure. They press for placing more weight on teaching skills and *student evaluations* instead of publications and research" (my emphasis). Well, if an intellectual focus does not help to define the role of a student, and professors can no longer engage in the rational exchange of opinion without hurling insults, and tenure is to be conferred through student evaluation with research subordinated to teaching, then one can only hope that from this intellectual bankruptcy initiatives will emerge to restore the once great tradition of teaching and research. That is unquestionably the aim of the Neusners, who have chronicled in a remarkably honest way the woeful story of higher education's decline.

LIBERAL ARTS

THE BOOMERANG EFFECT

After the Immigration and Naturalization Service raided a chicken processing plant in Columbus, Ohio, and rounded up and deported 65 illegal immigrant workers, 47 of the deportees were back in Ohio within days to claim their paychecks. According to FAIR's *Immigration Report* in January, Rocky Gasboro, president of the plant, said that one of the deportees came back with new fake identification. "He even had an Ohio driver's license. . . . If I didn't recognize his face, I may have hired him," Gasboro said.

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Nonsense as Nationalism

by Thomas Fleming

"There is always something new from Africa."
—Pliny the Elder

Igor Kopelnitsky

Not Out of Africa: How Afrocentrism Became an Excuse to Teach Myth as History
by Mary Lefkowitz
New York: Basic Books;
222 pp., $24.00

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By the early 1970's, I had come to the conclusion that American higher education could not get any worse. Most of the young and not-so-young Ph.D.'s in the humanities were intellectually anemic. What few brains they possessed had been starved on a diet of bogus theories and textbook generalities; hardly any of them had the fund of general learning that used to be expected of any gentleman, to say nothing of "a gentleman and a scholar." Feminism and structuralism had already raised their ugly heads, and it was not too hard to predict the wave after wave of French theoretical scum that would wash upon the desolate shores of the American mind.

In thinking that the humanities could only get marginally worse, I was guilty of an uncharacteristic optimism. I had failed to correlate the rising tide of minority rights with the falling standards of scholarship, the perfect formula—as it turned out—for multiculturalism in general and Afrocentrism in particular. Even in the late 80's, as Afrocentric books began to make a stir, I paid no attention: despite the low estate of American scholarship, the universities still contained dozens, even hundreds of philologists and archeologists who would give Leonard Jeffries and Martin Bernal the ridicule they deserve. Once again I was naive. Classicists and ancient historians, for the most part, remained silent; some even joined the barbarians. In a small way, the complicity of scholars reminds me of the German academics who turned their heads as their Jewish colleagues were expelled by the Nazis. In the short run, it was a good career move, although the shortest run was reserved for the part-Jewish professors who thought they were exempt. "Man is wolf to man," runs the optimistic Latin proverb.

I wish I knew of all the exceptions, but among the most distinguished critics of Afrocentrism, I should mention Frank Snowden—the only prominent black classicist—Emily Vermeule, and Mary Lefkowitz. I had always admired Professor Lefkowitz for her good judgment and her skeptical treatment of ancient biographies. An academic feminist who helped to pioneer women's studies in classics, she incurred the wrath of crackpot feminists, who objected to her androcentric insistence on logic and evidence. For the past several years, she has been writing careful but trenchant articles and reviews on the fantasies of multiculturalism. *Not Out of Africa* is the fruit of those labors.

It is a pity that a good scholar has had to waste her valuable time proving that 2 plus 2 equals four and not 378.77777 to the power of negative 12, but these are hard times. Abstracting a few general arguments from the welter of myth and pseudoscholarship, Professor Lefkowitz sets out to show that Egyptians did *not* invade Greece and leave behind a legacy of African civilization; that Greek philosophy is not an offshoot of Egyptian thought; that there never was a secret Egyptian doctrine; that, finally, the central story of Afrocentrism—the idea of a "stolen legacy"—is an absurd fabrication

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patched together from novels, folktales, and wishful thinking.

Much of the argumentation will be fairly obvious to educated people; in fact, we know a great deal about what the Greeks looked like, how they developed their culture, and what their attitude to foreign cultures was. A generation or two ago, when most half-educated people had read the ancient classics, if only in translation, no Martin Bernal could have humbugged the reading public with the absurdities of *Black Athena*. Central to Bernal's thesis (and to the case made by most Afrocentrists) is the idea that the Greeks would have been unwilling to admit their cultural dependency upon Africa. But, as Lefkowitz shows, Herodotus was credulous to the point of gullibility in believing what the Egyptians said about their influences on Greek civilization. Since Egypt was virtually a closed book, before the 19th century when some progress was made in the decipherment of hieroglyphics, the vision of Egypt handed down to Afrocentrists is essentially a Greek creation.

Some of the more amusing discussions concern the claims that Socrates and Cleopatra were African. Regarding Socrates, the only evidence comes from busts made of the philosopher generations after his death. The depiction, vaguely Negroid, probably does not go back to any life-portraits; it is obviously based on his own self-description (in Plato) as snub-nosed and resembling a silenus (a humanoid with horse's tail and ears).

Pericles' citizenship laws of 451 reserved Athenian citizenship to people whose father and mother were both citizens. This obviously excludes Ethiopians, and since the comic poets (particularly Aristophanes in the *Clouds*) ridiculed Socrates for every other peculiarity of his, it is utterly fantastic to suppose they would have ignored "the fact" of his being a Negro. "Saying that Socrates looks like a silenus means that Socrates looks like a silenus, not like an African. If we were to use his resemblance to a silenus as an indication of his origins, it would clearly be equally logical to infer that he was descended from bearded men with horse's ears and tails."

The case for Cleopatra is equally substantial, turning on the anonymity of *one* of her grandparents—the other three were Greco-Macedonian as far back as can be traced. Joel Rogers, in the Afrocentric classic *World's Great Men of Color*, clinches his argument for a black Cleopatra by misinterpreting a passage in *Antony and Cleopatra*. But even if he were right, what sort of a "scholar" treats Shakespeare as a source for ancient history?

The most fascinating sections of *Not Out of Africa* are not Professor Lefkowitz's refutations of Afrocentrist mythology, but her discussions of the subterranean tradition of Egyptian mystery cults. According to George James, the author of *Stolen Legacy*, the Egyptians were possessed of secret mystic lore which they communicated to Greek visitors who subsequently used it as the basis of their philosophical systems. Unfortunately, there is no evidence of any form of mysticism, philosophical or otherwise, among the Egyptians. What evidence we have of so-called mystery cults in Egypt makes it clear that they were imported directly from Greece, where such rites as the Eleusinian Mysteries were a distinctive form of Greek popular religion. The myth of Egyptian mysteries is largely based on the so-called Hermetic writings, a literary forgery of sorts, attributed to an ancient Egyptian, Hermes Trismegistus, but actually written in Greek in a period much later than that of the philosophers supposedly inspired by the Hermetica. The great scholar Isaac Casaubon revealed the truth in 1614, but the 17th century was a civilized age in which evidence and logic had some bearing on cases of fact.

Even more bizarre than the fantasy of Egyptian mysteries is the Masonic tradition that revived and elaborated on the myth. The vehicles of this cultural transmission were works of art: *Sethos*, a three-volume fictional biography by Abbé Jean Terrasson, and the many novels and operas that it spawned. The greatest monument to Afrocentrism is Mozart's *The Magic Flute*—an apotheosis of Masonic mumbo-jumbo. I take it as a tribute to my good sense that I always sided with the Queen of the Night against the blowhard Sarastro, who—if he were alive today—would probably be running the Vatican Bank from behind the scenes.

How black Americans like Frederick Douglass picked up these stories in the 19th century and used them to explain away African nonhistory makes a less interesting story; in fact, Professor Lefkowitz does not trace her story as far back as it can go. The earliest American Afrocentrist argument I know of occurs in an 1829 pamphlet of David Walker, a former slave, but she has little patience for these self-serving follies. Every ethnic group has made its share of "terrible and foolish mistakes," she says, asking, "Isn't treating African-Americans differently from the rest of humankind just another form of segregation and condescension?"

Yes and no. Yes to the extent that we are using a double standard in tolerating nonsense in the guise of history and hate-mongering in the form of African nationalism and black pride. On the other hand, our treatment of the past is not an exclusively rational affair. If I were not of European background, I am not at all sure that I would have spent so much time—even if I were born in America—learning Greek and Latin, to say nothing of the languages and histories of more recent European nations. Europe is our metropolis; the British are our cultural parents; the French, Germans, and Italians our cousins; the Greeks and Romans our grandparents. Even the Russians are at least second cousins once removed. I admire the Chinese and the Japanese, from what I know of them. I would like to know more, but my European self-absorption always draws me back to the founders of my own civilization.

Black Americans have it tough. Professor Lefkowitz avoids the difficult question of who the Egyptians were, but whoever they were, they were not blacks from sub-Saharan Africa. They are no more the ancestors of present-day African-Americans than St. Augustine or Callimachus, both of whom are African in the geographical sense. It is hard not to have some sympathy for African-Americans looking for a usable past. The trouble is, this search is motivated as much by resentment of European-American culture as by ancestral piety. A real study of African culture reveals strengths and beauties that black and white people in America might well envy, and an Afrocentrism that started with this reality might be forgiven for stretching the point.

Professor Lefkowitz is a hard-minded scholar who does not share my sentiments, but her book is one of the strongest weapons that any teacher and parent can have to defend the minds of our children against the racist poisons being poured into their ears in Black History Month. The least that we can do as civilized readers is to buy this book.

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Back to Parmenides

by John Caiazza

The Quantum Enigma: Finding the Hidden Key
by Wolfgang Smith
Peru, Illinois: Sherwood Sugden and Company; 139 pp., $14.95

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It is reported that when one of Pythagoras's followers revealed the Pythagorean brotherhood's deepest secret, the discovery of irrational numbers, he was killed. The discovery of irrational numbers came about as a direct result of the Pythagorean theorem, for the hypotenuse of a right triangle whose legs are one inch equals the square root of two; but the square root of two cannot be represented either by a whole number or a fraction composed of whole numbers. Such irrationals, as they are called, seemed a contradiction to the Greek worldview, a hole at the heart in the Pythagorean effort to understand the universe from a mathematical point of view; for the discovery of irrationals was the result of one of the ultimate products of Greek rationality, plane geometry.

The discovery of quantum indeterminacy in the 1920's and 30's may be said to have had the same effect on modern, Enlightenment culture as the discovery of irrational numbers had on ancient Greek culture. Like irrational numbers, quantum indeterminacy was discovered as a direct result of the most representative activity of our culture, empirical science, the ultimate product of Enlightenment rationality. The indeterminate physical processes discovered by quantum mechanics exist at the subatomic level, the atoms of Democritus having been dissolved by modern empirical science into a quagmire of particles and forces whose motions and interactions defy the usual notions of scientific causality. Matter at this level more closely resembles the "prime matter" of Aristotle than it does the billiard balls of Democritus or Newton, providing science and the human intellect in general with a series of frustrations as it attempts to compass quantum phenomena with the mathematical laws of Newtonian or even Einsteinian physics. Quantum physics is thus one of the events that has transformed modern culture into postmodern culture.

The Quantum Enigma: Finding the Hidden Key by Wolfgang Smith, a retired professor of mathematics, is an excellent book which reaffirms traditional and even ancient concepts of knowledge, self, and the world; combining, as did Smith's first book (*Cosmos and Transcendence*, 1984), the author's state-of-the-art knowledge of physics with a deep knowledge and understanding of Christian metaphysics. The book is short, well-written, and intellectually rigorous, yet it is approachable by anyone with an interest in metaphysics or the history of modern science. (An appendix provides an introduction to quantum physics for the general reader who has a high school knowledge of mathematics.) Unfortunately, there is not much writing of this sort done about science today, especially in popular writing of which the naturalism of Carl Sagan and Stephen J. Gould is about the best one can expect. Of the philosophy of science, one must either read pieces so highly technical that they cannot be understood outside a narrow slice of academic philosophy, which even the scientists cannot understand, or feminist and multicultural attacks that betray gross ideological prejudice and very little understanding of science itself.

Smith's book avoids all that, even as he deals with the difficult subject of quantum mechanics—the most fundamental theory in contemporary physics—dealing as it does with the properties of matter at the bottom of the reductive pyramid. Smith is at ease amid difficulty and controversy, finding the "hidden key" to the "quantum enigma" in an updated version of Platonic metaphysics. He is an Idealist in the philosophical sense, and one of the surprises of quantum mechanics is that it offers a scientific basis for the revival of this classic metaphysical doctrine. At the level of subatomic physics, experiment and observation, not subsequent interpretation, hold that physicists cannot separate the observer from the phenomena, much to the dismay of classically trained physicists. This enigma of quantum mechanics surpasses the problems of statistical mechanics, in which the sheer practical impossibility of determining the path of every molecule in a gas, for example, means that sampling and statistics must be relied on by the physicist, just as a political scientist relies on polling techniques to predict the outcome of an election. Rather, the enigma of quantum mechanics is as if preelection polling itself *determines* the outcome of an election (even granting that polling sometimes does affect the outcome of elections).

Unlike scientists such as Heisenberg, Smith thinks that the solution to the quantum enigma characterizes the epistemological and metaphysical issues of all of science, and he refuses to isolate subatomic phenomena from the rest of the known universe, i.e., the "micro" from the "macro" world. Smith argues that his characterization of quantum observation in terms of classical metaphysics, as the reduction of potency to actuality, applies to scientific observation of the macro world as well. To think that there is an intrinsic difference between the micro and macro worlds, as Heisenberg does, is to assume that "the passage from potency to actuality could be effected simply by joining together a sufficient number of atoms." One could respond, however, that the subworld of quantum physics resides in a qualitatively different epistemological realm. We can observe the baseballs and bats, planes and parachutes of the macro world, but such laws as we derive from our observation and experience will not necessarily fit the micro world of quantum phenomena, because the subworld of atomic physics is beyond our immediate experience.

Smith's general argument proceeds from the specific problem of quantum observation to the philosophy of nature. His principal criticism is of the Cartesian bifurcation of nature, as Whitehead famously called it, and he upbraids classical physicists for assuming that their general model of reality—mechanical, reductive, monochromatic, and denuded of all aspects typical of common experience—was reality itself. The bifurcation was first accomplished in modern science by Galileo, who sundered so-called "physical" reality from the lived re-

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ality of the common life-world by making the distinction between primary and secondary qualities, which he borrowed from the ancient Atomists. Smith's solution to the bifurcation problem also has an ancient provenance, for his assumption that discrete components of our life-world—observer and phenomenon, time and space, primary and secondary qualities—are "distinguishable aspects of one and the same reality" harks back, through Hegel, to Parmenides. Smith's application of Idealist philosophy to the foremost difficulties of atomic physics is striking and compelling, because Idealism is not a philosophy often associated with modern science; yet Smith's approach clarifies many of its difficulties.

It has been assumed by many in America and England that science supports a materialistic, pragmatic, or naturalistic point of view, but this is because these tendencies are already strong in our culture. Smith notes that independently minded philosophers such as Husserl and Whitehead have seen that modern science is as much a construct of abstract ideas as an experimental method and have drawn the appropriate conclusions from the overlooked fact that scientific theories can be understood as ideas, even in the Platonic sense. Smith uses this understanding to support an Idealist view of nature—one that is far more friendly to the reality of ideals such as justice, equity, and natural law. For Smith, the scientist's interaction with the indefinite phenomena of the subatomic world provides a key to man's creativity and a profound reflection of God's creativity as well.

Much has been written about quantum physics from the scientific, philosophical, and cultural points of view; in the last category, however, little has been done from a conservative standpoint, which is tragic. Although it does not touch politics in any direct manner, Smith's book is profoundly conservative, upholding the traditional understanding of the human race as an essential feature of the physical universe, whose existence therefore is no mere accidental confluence of forces, elements, and so forth. Strangely, the doctrine that mankind is an irrelevant aspect of the universe is felt to be supremely liberating by such writers as Stephen J. Gould, Bertrand Russell, and Carl Sagan.

For anyone with an interest in the interactions between modern science and culture, modern or postmodern, Smith's book is an excellent rejoinder. If conservatism is to reclaim Western culture, it will have to be at the deepest levels of contemporary thought, including those where science and culture meet.

John Caiazza is an independent scholar at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts.

U.S.A.: The Global Commons

by Wayne Lutton

Living Within Limits: Ecology, Economics, and Population Taboos
by Garrett Hardin
New York: Oxford University Press;
352 pp., $30.00

The Immigration Dilemma: Avoiding the Tragedy of the Commons
by Garrett Hardin
Washington, D.C.: Federation for American Immigration Reform;
140 pp., $5.00

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Roper's February polling of Americans reveals a clear consensus against high levels of immigration. Eighty-three percent favor a lower level of immigration than the current average of over a million a year, and some 70 percent support a level of immigration below 300,000 per year. This view is held by 52 percent of Hispanics, 73 percent of blacks, 72 percent of conservatives, 71 percent of moderates, 66 percent of liberals, 72 percent of Democrats, and 70 percent of Republicans. A majority supports even larger cuts, with 54 percent saying that annual immigration should be less than 100,000. Twenty percent want no more immigration at all. Concerning illegal immigration, the poll conducted for Negative Population Growth reveals strong support for tough measures: self-styled moderates (78 percent), the strongly religious (76 percent), whites (77 percent), Protestants (82 percent), and Midwesterners (85 percent). Sixty percent of English-speaking Hispanics want illegal immigration halted, as do 68 percent of blacks and 69 percent of Catholics. The results confirm what several decades of polling on the subject have consistently shown: that a majority of the public has never supported the sort of immigration policies instituted by Congress and the Executive Branch.

On a related matter, a bemused writer for the *Wall Street Journal* reported in early March that a majority of registered Republican voters express support for environmental safeguards. That there are "greenies" among Republicans came as something of a surprise to the business journalist. But this merely shows how out of touch the GOP's "leadership" is. After all, "the environment" is where people live. And most Americans would like to breathe clean air, drink safe water, and enjoy the outdoors.

Perhaps the most fearless and original thinker on the interrelated topics of population and our environment is Garrett Hardin, professor emeritus of human ecology at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Now in his 81st year, he continues to write craftily argued articles—with another book on the way—debunking the optimistic Alfred E. Neuman school of thought so favored by the editors of the *Wall Street Journal*, the Cato Institute, Julian Simon and Ben Wattenberg, and the Republican congressional leadership, especially Majority Leader Dick Armey. In *Living Within Limits*, Hardin takes the fundamentally conservative position that on matters relating to the economy, our environment, and future prospects, we should always hedge our bets and not, like Mr. McCawber, simply assume that "something will turn up." As we near the end of the 20th century, mankind confronts a situation earlier generations did not have to consider. "The time-honored practice of pollute and move on is no longer acceptable," Hardin points out. The globe is filled. There are no empty continents. Humans have nowhere else to go.

Hardin likens our world to a lifeboat: only a limited number of people can ride in it before it sinks. And not everyone is going to be saved. The old Enlightenment idea of "progress," predicated on the assumption of perpetual growth, is irrelevant in a world which has a finite carrying capacity. Sentimentality must not be permitted to cloud our ability to take measures to preserve resources, not only for ourselves, but for future generations. Thus far, countries whose populations have grown beyond their capacity to care

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for them have managed to share the costs by appealing to foreign aid. This option no longer pertains. Hardin insists that there is no *global* problem of population and resources: each country will have to take care of itself. Thus, he makes a powerful case for closed borders and the end of immigration from poor countries to richer ones: "The production of human beings is the result of very localized actions; corrective actions must be local. . . . Globalizing the 'population problem' would only ensure that it would never be solved."

Our resolve to deal with immigration and related issues has been undermined not only by the spirit of unwarranted optimism, but by the effort to instill a sense of guilt for the level of prosperity and the type of society that Westerners have managed to create. As he remarks, "Anyone who tries to comprehend the spirit of our times is soon impressed with the popularity of guilt-mongering. . . . In the first half of the 20th century, anthropologists taught people to be ashamed of ethnocentrism. So successful were they that some guilt-mongers have now gone to the extreme of becoming *ethnofugalists*: they see virtue only in people other than their own kind. Often the greater the *otherness*, the greater the asserted virtue and beauty."

A consequence of this "flight from the ethnic center of their own upbringing" is the promotion of what is euphemistically called "diversity" (i.e., non- and anti-Western people and cultures). "Those who promote limitless diversity," he writes, "seem not to have noticed the disorder and violence associated with massive diversity in Africa and the Balkans. The faster the rate of immigration and the more diverse the reluctantly conjoined cultures, the greater is the threat of balkanization. And balkanized territories, under whatever name, are not noted for their devotion to political equality."

The United States' particular population problem is immigration. By the early 1970's, on their own and without government coercion, the American people made the decision to limit their fertility rate, which should have stabilized our population. But while American citizens voluntarily chose to limit their future population growth, Congress opened the country's doors to massive waves of immigration from the Third World. This is a topic that Professor Hardin has long wrestled with. Some of his best writings have recently been collected and appear in *The Immigration Dilemma.* In his now classic paper, "The Tragedy of the Commons," published here as Chapter Three, he argues that, like the commons pastures in Medieval Europe, natural resources can be misused, overexploited, and eventually exhausted when they are unmanaged and available to everyone without restrictions.

Hardin has extended this argument specifically to the immigration debate. If the United States is, in effect, a sort of global commons that everyone has the right to move into, then how can we hope to prevent the spoliation of our country and insure that it will exist as a secure and decent place for our children? He relates continuing high levels of immigration to other problems, such as unemployment and pollution, which persists because immigration-fueled population growth has undercut many of the benefits that were supposed to accrue from environmental restraints. More fundamental is the loss of the genuine sense of community once shared by Americans when they were less "diverse." "Indiscriminating altruism"—the universalist impulse—threatens our future as a people. True compassion, Hardin reminds us, can be given only to those who are close to you. He cites Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's observation, "If everyone is my brother, I have no brothers."

Only four countries—the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand—welcome large numbers of legal immigrants. Professor Hardin advises that the time has come when we should, as a practical matter, "reduce immigration to zero." Ideas, after all, are patentable and travel electronically around the globe. People can always *visit*! But there is no need for them physically to move here.

In his concluding essay, which first appeared in *Chronicles* in 1993, he writes, "The bottom line is this: the days are over when in-migration could be defended as a solution to any national problem. Japan has known this all along. . . . To become rational about immigration Americans need to disown the appalling advice of Emma Lazarus." Garrett Hardin urges us to think longer range, and to remember that the first concern of public policy should be to ensure our own survival.

Wayne Lutton is associate editor of The Social Contract *quarterly and a contributor to* Immigration and the American Identity *(The Rockford Institute).*

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At Loggerheads

by William Baldwin

Caught in the Net
by Anthony V. Margavio and Craig J. Forsyth, with Shirley Laska and James Mason
College Station: Texas A&M University Press; 156 pp., $32.50

The Endangered Species Act is a controversial directive. The snail darter and spotted owl have gleaned no end of headlines, having been used to justify the preservation of huge areas of habitat. Less well known is the plight of our sea turtles, large amphibians that are in particular danger when they enter the shallows in the spring in preparation for breeding and laying their eggs in beach sand.

Shrimpers towing their nets in these same areas often catch, and occasionally drown, the turtles. Other dangers exist, of course: recreational boaters, plastic debris that the turtles mistake for food, and, more broadly, pollution and beachfront development. Still, it is the shrimpers who bear the burden of environmental legislation, being required to draw turtle excluder devices, otherwise known as TEDs. The TEDs do seem to work, as fewer dead turtles wash up on the beaches. But the devices cut the shrimp catch by 10 to 15 percent, which in hard times can eliminate the profit. Also, the TEDs must be pulled in places where, and seasons when, turtles are seldom caught. Who are threatened more, the turtles or the shrimpers?

That is the question being asked by these Louisiana sociologists, and though at the beginning they claim scientific objectivity, the very fact they are asking at all suggests populist sympathies. The environmental problems are very real, and fishing techniques are indeed wasteful, but why have shrimpers suddenly become the villains? On the Cajun level, at least, they represent a way of life that enforces the dignity of work, community life, self-sufficiency, and pride, as opposed to a powerful environmental movement tainted by elitism and corporate dealing.

The Cajun shrimpers of the Louisiana coast had had enough. Volunteer programs and an alternate design for TEDs were discussed. Meetings were held and more meetings, but the legislation went through anyway. In response, the shrimpers blockaded harbor entrances in an act of civil disobedience. Public sympathy was with the environmentalists. The government has claimed victory, and yet both the turtles and the fishermen are languishing. It is a tangled mess, what we in the shrimping business used to call a "Gaum": when the net came up wrapped around both "doors," and the whole was soaked in mud. The conflict does, indeed, seem to have a life of its own.

The authors have done a serviceable job of assembling data, and the concluding essays are excellent. Here we learn: one, how environmental groups tend to pick out winnable projects that bring in public support and funds (saving turtles is simpler than cleaning up our air and water, and much more likely to gain corporate support); two, how two government agencies are both supporting and opposing the shrimpers; three, how the real dangers to the shrimpers are recreational fishermen and a spate of condos and tourists that will soon reduce the Cajun community to relics of local color; and four, how the post-Civil War South has been manipulated by foreign urban (Yankee) capital, to which an analogy can be drawn with English game laws and the survival of "common folks." Historically, when a sophisticated and wealthy elite comes seeking recreation, the working-class natives are in for a rough time.

This is an insightful and well-written book. As a resident of a small shrimping community (Atlantic coast version), I often found myself nodding along and muttering internally, "Yes, that's so." Still, the early chapters are barely linked to each other. A nonacademic approach to the same material would have concentrated on a single Cajun community, or on one shrimper like Tee John, "the Jesus of Shrimpers," and traced the actions up to the dramatic blockade. That sort of narrative technique is more likely to get the reader to finish the book, while still conveying its point.

William Baldwin was a longtime shrimper, and his father, a wildlife biologist, did the first study of the loggerhead (sea) turtle. His new novel is The Fennel Family Papers *(Algonquin).*

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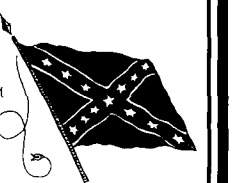

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by Samuel Francis

The Buchanan Victory

Whether a full-scale nuclear war between modern superpowers would last quite as long as the three-week blitzkrieg among this year's candidates for the Republican presidential nomination is an intriguing question that neither military nor political scientists seem to have asked, but whatever the answer, a duel with nuclear weapons might well be less bloodthirsty than the GOP's recent shoot-out at the OK Corral of American democracy. Rousseau remarked that the English people were really free only once every seven years when they were allowed to vote for a new Parliament, and to judge from the foolishness, lies, and chicanery in which most of the leading Republican contenders engaged, Americans might be better off if we gave up the pretense of freedom entirely and contented ourselves with the benign and pacific Oriental despotism of Suleiman the Magnificent.

The fraudulence of the Republican primaries was transparent from the first, with the most insipid of the candidates, Lamar Alexander, running around the country banging on a piano in his increasingly malodorous plaid shirt. If the Republican rank-and-filers who had to endure his clowning had any self-respect, they would have pelted him from the podium with rotten fruit and dead cats for coming before them with his insults to their intelligence. But few of the other ne'er-do-wells who presented themselves for the mandate of the people's will were any better.

Yet the star of the Republican primaries, and most likely of the whole election, was Pat Buchanan, whose early victories seemed to promise a political revolution that would elevate American politics above the level of mind-numbing piano-playing and the triumph of high-rolling backstairs intrigue. Buchanan was by far the most interesting and the most substantive candidate the Republicans or the country had to offer, and for those Americans who have glimpsed the full depths of the depravity to which our political culture has sunk, it was no surprise that his early successes were greeted by the concerted onslaught of mendacity and character assassination that played a major role in turning his success into failure.

Buchanan's victory in New Hampshire elicited much the same mentality inside Washington, on both the right and the left, that must have prevailed in Paris when the Germans swung around the Maginot Line, and one can easily imagine such spokesdogs of the old order as Sam Donaldson and George Will hoofing it to Casablanca to wheedle for letters of transit to some safer climate.

The old order did not crumble, of course, but stood and fought with the only weapons it has left, and for the last two weeks of February and well into March, the court media raked up and rehearsed every conceivable flaw, foible, and florid passage remotely associated with Buchanan, from provocative sentences in his columns a decade earlier to confidential memoranda he had written for Richard Nixon in the early '70s; to the schoolboy tricks he and his brothers may or may not have played on the neighbors of their parents in the 1950's; to the friends with whom he occasionally has dinner today; to the way he pronounced supposed "code words" like "Goldman Sachs." If the last one was part of a code, none but the Ruling Class itself understood it, since most Americans probably think Goldman Sachs is the name of a Manhattan department store.

Undoubtedly the smear-krieg was one of the principal reasons for Buchanan's subsequent loss; even if Republican voters didn't believe it, they knew it was only a foretaste of what would be unleashed if Buchanan won the nomination, and they also figured (perhaps inaccurately) that a nominee subjected to such a mendacious Niagara could not win the election. Since winning the election is the only principle the Stupid Party cares about any more, it seemed to follow that the harmless and decrepit Bob Dole rather than Buchanan should be the party's choice.

But there is another reason for Buchanan's failure besides the smear-krieg by left and right, and that has to do with a fundamental flaw of his campaign. That flaw was probably not the fault of the candidate himself, at least not in any sense larger than that the man in charge is always at fault for whatever goes wrong, and it may be a flaw that is inherent in the nature of any populist crusade of the right in contemporary American politics. But it remains a flaw, and it needs to be made clear to anyone who seeks to pick up the Buchanan mantle in the future.

Precisely because Buchanan chose to challenge the power structure of American politics, he was never able to attract the high-dollar contributions from the plutocrats that constantly fed the campaigns of his rivals. By the time of the Arizona primary, the turning point of the campaign, Buchanan had spent a total of about $10 million, compared to the $25 million spent by Mr. Dole and Malcolm S. "Steve" Forbes, Jr. Mr. Forbes, of course, spent his own money in order to avoid federal spending limits, and by doing so he was able to buy the Arizona primary, one of his few victories. Dole, Alexander, and even Phil Gramm, precisely because they mounted campaigns intended to serve the plutocracy, were able to pull far more money into their coffers and to deck out their campaigns with all the bells and whistles needed to make good Republicans believe that the candidates before them and the choices offered them are real.

Because of the financial limitations of the Buchanan campaign, Buchanan was unable to build the kind of organization he needed. His strategy from the first was to concentrate his whole effort on early states like Louisiana, Iowa, and New Hampshire, and in those states his organization was sound and his efforts were victorious. The problems arose immediately afterwards, when the lack of preparation in Arizona, South Carolina, and Georgia began to cause the campaign's bottom to fall out.

Not only was the campaign unprepared in those and other states, but Buchanan failed to make use of the issues that could have brought him grassroots votes there. He failed to make affirmative action a major theme in the

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South and continued to dwell on his opposition to free trade and abortion, issues that appealed only to special and limited constituencies. Perhaps most important, in South Carolina, he or his campaign or both managed to flub the Confederate Flag issue, one that could have brought him a clear victory on the eve of a bank of Southern primaries. The story behind the boondoggle exposes a further flaw in the psychology of the campaign.

For the last couple of years, the Confederate Flag that flies over the state capitol in Columbia has been the center of a statewide controversy, with the NAACP, white liberals, and mainstream conservatives in the state demanding or condoning its removal. The flag has not been removed, in large part because one man, a local chiropractor named Bill Carter, successfully mobilized a grass-roots crusade to keep it flying. Carter in 1992 was state chairman for David Duke's presidential campaign, a fact well known in the state and to the local Buchanan campaign when it appointed Carter to its steering committee this year.

But when the Larry Pratt affair broke just before the New Hampshire primary, the South Carolina Buchanan campaign told Carter he had to be dropped from the committee because of his ties to Duke. Indeed, despite Buchanan's own principled and courageous public expressions of support for Pratt, who had spoken before some rather bizarre groups on the right, the campaign began purging former Duke supporters and other workers who had even the slightest "links" to the out-of-the-mainstream right.

But in South Carolina, the Buchanan campaign managed to alienate Carter and his followers, who consist of some 45,000 names. Carter had already started mobilizing this following for Buchanan and preparing mass mailings to get his people into the voting booths when the Buchanan campaign chucked him out. Buchanan himself, in Arizona at the time, was quoted in the South Carolina press as saying his campaign "had no room for racists or those connected to racist organizations." Whether this remark was aimed at Carter or whether the local press merely played it that way remains unclear.

But what is clear is that by alienating Carter, Buchanan muffed the Confederate Flag issue in the state. Carter did send out some 9,000 pieces of mail urging voters in the state's third congressional district to vote for Buchanan, and two of the five counties in the district were the only ones Buchanan carried in the state. But had Carter sent out the full mailing, which he could not do without help from the campaign, Buchanan might have won similar results across South Carolina. As Carter himself wrote in a subsequent op-ed, "Without ever having met me or knowing anything about me, Buchanan was polishing his own image in the press at my expense . . . . What chance does a little guy like me have to be heard or have his say?"

It's doubtful that either Buchanan or his national campaign was trying to harm Carter, but that may have been the result. It's more likely that the smear-krieg mounted by the national press in the week before was affecting the campaign, certainly at the local and perhaps at the national level. The campaign's immediate response to the charges of "racism" and "racist" associates and workers was one of denial, escape, and evasion and a noticeable muting of themes that might be interpreted as catering to "racism."

But the blunt truth is that there can be no serious national campaign of the populist right without former Duke supporters, militia members, and other inhabitants of the margins of national politics, and it is not possible to organize a real campaign without them. Those who lead and run a populist campaign of the right have to face that truth and to figure out how to deal with it when confronted with their "links" to such "extremists." They can do what the Buchanan campaign did, which was to purge the marginal elements and curl up in denial, or they can go on the offensive, exposing how the Ruling Class and its pet media use charges of "racism" and "extremism" to delegitimize and suppress any challenge to their power from the right. If they do the former, they will merely reconfirm the legitimacy of the imposed political boundaries; if they do the latter, they will retain their own support and use the occasion for a further challenge to the powers they claim to be opposing.

The Buchanan failure was a failure to follow through on the radicalism his campaign had originally promised, and it suggests that the radical implications of the campaign remain unclear in the minds of those who designed and managed the campaign, that the campaign sought to keep at least one foot firmly in the camp of conservative Republicanism and was unable or unwilling to step outside the camp into the new identity it promised to create.

Yet these were tactical failures of execution, and it would be a serious error to dwell on them too much at the expense of the larger strategic victory the Buchanan campaign won, despite its failure to capture the Republican nomination. The strategic victory of the Buchanan campaign lies in the fact that Buchanan destroyed the political pretenses of both neoconservatism and the mainstream right and replaced them with his own nationalist, populist, and Middle American paradigm. The important fact about the Buchanan campaign of 1996 is that Buchanan steadily won second place throughout the early contests, when he faced several better-funded and better-organized campaigns with far more establishment support. It was to those other banners that neoconservatives and the Beltway right flocked. Their first choices—Jack Kemp, Dan Quayle, Bill Bennett, Dick Cheney—could not even mount campaigns. Their second-level choice, Phil Gramm, could not make it to the first primary. Bennett then signed on with Alexander and was shot out of the skies a few weeks later. Kemp then went with Forbes and followed Bennett into oblivion.

The clear lesson is that neither neoconservatism nor the Beltway right (insofar as they are at all distinguishable) can any longer command a significant political following at the grass-roots level; only Buchanan or a movement espousing his ideas can do so, and the hatred and fury with which his early success was greeted shows that the Ruling Class knows this. It also must know that its age of dominance is coming to an end, and that in its last days it has no better defense than to rely on the kind of repression that it visited upon the man who has shaken its foundations more than any other in the last quarter century. For all the flaws and uncertainties of the Buchanan campaign, it would be a mistake for either the friends or the foes of the movement Buchanan has created and mobilized to imagine that the king's men can ever put the Ruling Class and its old order back together again. What its friends must do now is understand how to build on their real victories and to avoid the tactical errors that helped thwart their completion of its victory.

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Letter From the Crimea

by William Mills

The Price of Folly

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On the night train from Kiev to Simferopol I share a compartment with Volodymyr Prytula, a Crimean journalist. Called "Vova" by his friends, this slender man with a Zhivagoesque mustache is my sole contact in the Crimea. He speaks little English, I no Ukrainian or Russian, but we communicate with the help of Ukrainian red wine. I have read his articles in English in *Uncaptive Minds*, a journal of information about Eastern Europe. Besides being a freelance journalist, Vova heads up the Crimean branch of the Ukrainian Independent Center of Political Research. He helps monitor all the trouble in the Crimea, and there's plenty of that.

Ukrainian folk songs are played over the train sound system. Lots of accordions. Before total darkness sets in, I can see food plots being tended by old people: corn, squash, sunflowers, leafy greens. Later when the train stops at a station, we get out and see what the people are selling. Vova buys us each an ear of boiled corn on the cob. We agree it is tough. Then I spy boiled crawfish! This I never expected in the middle of the Ukraine. Because I used to enjoy them in Louisiana, I buy just one for the taste. It is good, but not spicy like the Cajuns would do them. I see fish that have been smoked on coat hangers, and we buy a small bag of pale colored apples. I am struck by the vendors, everyone hustling, poor, but valiant. One old woman stops her selling long enough to bind up her crippled leg.

Vova turns in, but I have trouble sleeping. I get dressed and get out of the train every time it stops. Once we wait for 20 minutes in Shevchenko, a city named after Ukraine's great hero and poet. On the platform I talk in English to the mayor of Krasnoperekopsk, Sergei Kunitsyn. His city is located in northwestern Crimea. He too served in the Afghanistan War. The mayor runs the North Crimean Experimental Economic Zone where that strange animal, private enterprise, is being tried. The mayor tells me he has been to the Brookings Institute. Back in the car I notice that the woman who should tend the samovar has passed out from liquor.

At morning light, the train rumbles along a narrow corridor with salt bays on each side. Many people are fishing, some in small black inflatable boats. I get the impression that the fishing is not just for sport. Finally, at Dzhankoy, the mayor leaves us, transferring to the train for Krasnoperekopsk.

We are met in Simferopol by Vova's beautiful girlfriend, Ireni, and his friend Lyonya who has a short, scraggly beard, looks about 50, and has his own radio show. After lunch Lyonya drives me to the Hotel Moscow. On the way he tells me he was a submarine captain for a Russian research vessel. He jokes about our route to the hotel: "Now we are on Karl Marx Street," "Now Lenin Square."

The Hotel Moscow is a dilapidated Intourist establishment. Drop-in clients are still unusual. The surly desk clerk is typical of those in nearly all Intourist hotels I have ever stayed in. Through Lyonya she tells me severely that if I stay longer than this day, I must reserve the room in advance. As I was to discover, the hotel was nearly empty the whole time I was there. As I leave the desk, she says, "The hot water is off because it is being worked on." It didn't work for the next three weeks and almost certainly it had not worked for weeks before I came.

Vova and Ireni had arranged for a young woman to be my interpreter, and she was to arrange a trip by bus to Yalta. We went to the central station where her mother showed up. The mother was formerly a physicist (as was the father who at one time had taught in Cuba). It soon became apparent that she was semihysterical about her only child going off with a stranger and proceeded to rent a car for me. It came with a drunken Russian passenger who carried on a brisk conversation with the mother. Later the young interpreter explained that the man said his girlfriend in Moscow had refused him and so he was on his way to Yalta to find a woman. Why the mother thought her daughter would be better off in this circumstance beats me. Before our driver made it out of the parking lot, the mother had stopped us twice to hug her daughter before she left on her desperate journey to Yalta with the American.

Off we went on our merry way, the Russian drinking from his liter of warm beer. Sometimes the interpreter would not tell me what he said, apparently because it was too crude. Once in a while he would say to me, "Excuse me," this being his only English. At a mountain pass where there is a military checkpoint the Russian announced he had to relieve himself and got out while the driver was yelling, "No, no Alexis!" I assumed he was going behind some bushes, but in front of the armed border guards he desecrates the side of the mountain. I am becoming uneasy.

We make it to Yalta and stop at Chekhov's villa, now a museum. The small grounds had some large trees, and the villa was modest. Chekhov had built the place in 1898, coming here because of his tuberculosis which he had had since his mid-20's. He was to live only six more years. Russians have come to the Black Sea coast since they annexed the Crimea in 1783. It is a warm place, which is at a premium. There are hundreds of sanitoriums in the Crimea built by the Soviets.

We finally lost the Russian at Count Vorontsov's Palace in Alupka. The count built it in the 1830's in a style some call Moorish-Tudor. At the time he was living in Odessa as Governor General of Southern Russia with his wife Countess Eliza. It was there and then that the Countess had her way with Pushkin. Their affair got Pushkin sent off to the boondocks. In the 1840's, Vorontsov was appointed Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasus by Tsar Nicolas and at the Tsar's insistence was directed to resume "pacifying" Chechnya and Daghestan. The Russians set about killing Chechens and the Chechens returned the favor. Does this sound familiar? As I write, some 150 years later, the Chechens are holding Russian hostages in Daghestan (subsequently massacred) and other Chechen sympathizers have taken over a ship out of Trabzon with Russian hostages.

After visiting the very fine botanical garden at Alushta, which was also created by Vorontsov initiative, we take the bus

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back at dark to Simferopol. The next day a tearful mother calls Vova and says her daughter can no longer act as interpreter. The mother is terrified that the criminal gangs will knock off her daughter after dark, much less the American. Her fears are not entirely groundless. A well-off businessman who was their friend had been murdered within the year.

The fact is the situation in the Crimea is tumultuous. In 1954 Khrushchev gave the Crimea to the Ukraine to celebrate a long history of Ukrainian-Russian relations. While there was a Soviet Union, this did not change much. After all, Russia does not share any land border with the Crimea. But when the Soviet Union collapsed, being part of the Ukraine did matter. Communist nomenclatura and military men have retired to the Crimea in such numbers that Russians are 68 percent of the population. But they are no longer in the Soviet Union and do not want to be part of the Ukraine.

After the Ukraine declared its independence, the idea of Crimean separatism heated up, and in the 1994 elections the Russian bloc headed by Yuri Meshkov scored a victory. There had been a preelection promise to hold a referendum on reunification with Russia, but attempts to move in this direction were persistently thwarted by the Ukrainian Parliament in Kiev. After insisting that the Crimean Constitution conform to the Ukrainian Constitution, and after this failed to be carried out by Meshkov forces, the office of the Crimean president was abolished, and the Crimean government was placed under the Ukrainian ministers in Kiev.

All of this means that disorder often reigns. In the meantime, the power vacuum is being filled by criminal gangs that often work hand in glove with old communist politicians. There is a Crimean or Russian saying that roughly translated means, "A wealthy man is his own death warrant." It is well known that assassinations of businessmen in Moscow are rampant. Likewise in the Crimea. Thus, the fear of my interpreter's mother about her daughter's welfare.

The next day Vova arranged for me to accompany Lyonya and United Nations personnel as they visited various refugee settlements around Simferopol. He also arranged for another interpreter, Helen Krylova, a university student. As I was ultimately to discover, she should be wearing one of those shirts with "No Fear" on it.

We were accompanied by a Tartar representative, but initially we visited an Armenian settlement and then a Greek one. These families had been forced under one circumstance or another from their Crimean homes, many of them being relocated to Central Asia. One of the Armenians we talked to, for example, had come from Tashkent. The Armenians and Greeks had been small minorities in the Crimea. Almost none of the houses were complete, even if lived in. Before our little party left the small Greek enclave, the Tartar representative was in a heated argument with one of the Greeks. Apparently the Greek had mentioned some help he had received from the Crimean authorities, and the Tartar was griping vociferously that the government was not helping his people.

We finally made our way out of town to a rather large Tartar settlement. At this point, it is necessary to review some Crimean history. Mongols, misnamed Tartars, have been in what is now Russia at least since the end of the 13th century. A part of the Golden Horde eventually settled in the Crimea in the 15th century and was ruled by the Crimean Tartar khanate. Khanate rule lasted until Russia annexed the territory in 1783. As Russians moved in, slowly the Tartar percentage of the population declined, and by the 20th century they were a minority. Massacre by the Bolsheviks and famines reduced them to 25 percent by 1923. And then the worst. Accused by Stalin of mass collaboration with the Nazis who briefly controlled the Crimea, the entire population of 250,000 was deported overnight. Most were sent to Uzbekistan and others to Siberia and Kazakhstan. Roughly half of them died en route or within the first few months. Although Khrushchev denounced the deportation in 1956, the Tartars were permanently forbidden to return to the Crimea, and so it remained until 1991 when many, around 250,000, returned.

In the settlement we visited, there were about 60 houses in various states of completion. Cut stone was used, though some of them had only mud and straw bricks. Some lived in tents near where they were working. An old man told us there was one water tap for all 60 families. When I asked him what he was cooking on his one burner stove he stuck out his chest proudly and said "Crimean borscht." It looked to be nearly all cabbage.

The next day was spent in the town of Bakhchisaray, which was the old capital of the khanate. The palace, built in the 16th century, destroyed by the Russians in 1735, and rebuilt beginning in 1738, was well worth the trip alone. The minarets are visible at some distance, then once inside the outer walls, the space becomes much more intimate. Inside we were accompanied by Ebubekirov Server, a historian. Of the three courts inside, the most interior was the living quarters of the khan and his family. Inside one of the rooms was a small white fountain in the middle, and around the interior walls a dais for sitting and reclining while conversing, the sound of the water as accompaniment. In another room there is a famous fountain dedicated to a slave-girl whom the khan loved. It is famous because Pushkin left a rose in the fountain. On the day I visited, a red and a yellow rose rested at the top level.

In the afternoon I had an appointment with Mustafa Jemilev (spelled variously "Dzhemilev," "Cemilev"), the leader of the Crimean Tartars and Chairman of the Assembly of the Crimean Tatar People, called the Mejlis. He has dark curly hair, a short beard and slightly graying mustache, and dark, haunting eyes that have seen more than they should have in one lifetime. A journalistic hazard of a foreign correspondent is that in a country new to him, he frequently is talking to people about situations of which he has only a superficial knowledge. Afterwards he tries to build up a fuller picture. I knew I was in the presence of a serious man, and a great man, but it was only later that I discovered some of his history. I expect it is very disconcerting for the Tartars and for Mr. Jemilev to experience the ignorance of the world about what happened to them. They do not have the resources to employ public relations firms in Washington and Paris or a large émigré population from the Soviet Union. I feel sure when I asked Mr. Jemilev about any Tartar involvement with the invading Germans against the Bolshevik armies in World War II, he must have sighed inwardly, having been asked the question many times before. Later I was to read that, yes, there had been some Tartars in German units, but there had been many more non-Tartars, e.g., Ukrainians, Volga Germans, Russians, who had helped to fight the Bolsheviks, but who were not persecuted in mass after the war.

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We also talked about the tension between the Tartars and the Russians (not the Ukrainians). In the early 1990's, Russian officials would incite the "citizens" to tear down the Tartar tents or half-built houses. There are currently physical encounters between the criminal gangs who control the open-air markets and the Tartar merchants. The gangs try to shake them down and the Tartars will not go along. A taxi driver in Theodosia on the coast told me he and his cab had to work two days a month for a gang. At one market, the Russians attacked the Tartars, and soon thereafter one of the gang's restaurants was burned out. I asked Mr. Jemilev if the tension was increasing, and he said it only seems calmer now. This conversation took place before the recent Russian elections. The results of those elections, with the Communists and Nationalists coming out ahead, are probably not comforting to the Tartars. As the Tartars say, they can only depend on themselves.

The gangs have put out the word that five Tartar politicians will be killed. Jemilev laughed as he said he was hurt that his name was not among the five. Probably a mistake. This is a man, as I was to discover later, who knew all about intimidation and persecution. The Russians had imprisoned him for a total of 15 years for his human rights activities. His mother had carried him in her arms as the family was loaded into cattle cars during the deportation of 1944. He was 16 months old. She and the four young children were now officially "traitors." The reason his father was not then labeled a traitor was because he was at the front in the Red Army. At war's end, when he was discharged, then he became a "traitor" and was sent to Uzbekistan.

From his teens Jemilev tried to reconstruct the history of his people, which had been obliterated because of "anti-Soviet" activity. Corrupt Soviet historians had rewritten the story to suit their political aims, much in the way corrupt American historians are doing now in "revising" our high school texts. Jemilev pursued his research between and sometimes during his various imprisonments, and it is his restoration of Crimean Tartar history that has made him the leader and spokesman for his people.

Later in the day my energetic interpreter and I hiked the couple of miles to the Uspensky (Dormition) Cave Monastery, which dates from the eighth century. One climbs steps to the sanctuary, which was cut out of the rock of a cliff. Then we continued to the old fortress of Chufut-Kale. After the Turks had sacked the fortress, the Karaim Jewish sect moved in and stayed, probably until the 19th century. The Karaim had broken with mainstream Judaism around 1000 A.D., and gradually some of them came to the Crimea. Now the fortress and the caves are once again abandoned.

The Crimea and all of the lands around the Black Sea are freighted with long history and archaeological remains. If bureaucratic barriers to the tourist situation are ever removed, meaning of course placing tourism under private ownership, which is all that ever works well, everyone will benefit, both the Crimeans and the tourists. But the old Soviet way is still in place in the Ukraine and thus in the Crimea, and unless you are invited by someone in the country and he seeks out a visa for you from the Interior Ministry, one must prepay for Intourist hotels that one has never seen and thereby establish an itinerary, then present the receipt to a consulate for a visa.

The history and prehistory drew me here in the first place. High above my hotel in Simferopol was a Scythian Neapolis dating from the third century B.C. Seventy burial sites of Scythian noblemen have been unearthed.

I was interested in seeing Theodosia (Kaffa) and Sudak, where Greeks, Genoese, and Ottomans have held power. Cars are easily hired, but as my intrepid interpreter demonstrated to me, if I asked the price it would be $100 one way—if she asked it might be $25. I followed her instructions: "Don't say one word in English." (Incidentally, the Turkish visas for Americans are twice the cost of what they are for others.) In Theodosia, I did not see any Greek remains, but the Genoese fortress was much in evidence. As one travels about the Black Sea, whether in Turkey, Georgia, or the Crimea, one is struck with awe at the energy that once drove businessmen to found the *emporia*, in the case of the Greeks, and these fortresses in the case of the Genoese. On my way home I stopped off in Genoa, just to get near the former heart of this merchant empire, visiting the Casa di San Giorgio (the House or Bank of St. George), which lent money to governments and merchants and ended up with property in the Black Sea, and also visiting the homes of great merchants and benefactors like Andrea Doria.

Sudak is not as glitzy as Yalta, but the beach and mountains are as beautiful and the Genoan fortress much larger than that of Theodosia, and in better repair. At the Hotel Horizon, I had an authentic socialist dining experience. One had to pay for three meals with the room. I was assigned Table #1 with some other people, but they were wise enough not to come at the mandatory 8:00 A.M. breakfast. At 8:00 there was no sign of breakfast, and no waitress to be seen. In each plate was a piece of raw bell pepper, two slices of raw cucumber, cabbage cut like slaw with no dressing, and half a hard-boiled egg. In 15 minutes, the socialist waitress traipses in dropping a spoon in every glass of her 25 tables. Five minutes later she drops one spoon of sugar. Finally I get a piece of bread and decide to leave. The other people arrive at 8:30, when a two-inch square of tough scrambled eggs is dished out. I decide to leave again, and then for the *piéce de resistance*, the tea appears. This was my first and last meal at the Horizon.

For a culinary coda, I decided to eat my evening meal along the beach. In a little outdoor restaurant covered with the light camouflage netting used to prevent air attack I ordered the only available item, which was kabob. At least here one could dine when one chose and the crowd was very unregimented. As all the kabobs for the restaurant were cooking, the lights failed. In order for the cook to see what he was doing, someone brought his Mercedes up from the rear and the cooking was finished in the headlights. Since the kabob was mostly gristle, it was just as well eating in the dark. As soon as I finished, the lights came on again.

Back in Simferopol one day, Helen took me to her Church of the Holy Trinity, which is the largest Russian Orthodox church in Simferopol. There I met the priest, Vasily Pavlov, who is in fact a Crimean Greek. He said Greek and Russian Orthodox all worship together. Father Pavlov, who was perhaps 30, said that some young people are slowly coming into the church, and of course many old people had remained believers under the communists even though persecuted. He noted that when the Apostle Andrew had first visited the Crimea, he found 20 believers already here. Crimea was further important in the development of the Orthodox Church, since Vladimir of Kievan Russia was baptized

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here and went on to make Christianity the official religion. I noted that the interior of the church was in a fine state of restoration and outside large mosaics were in various stages of completion, and Father Pavlov replied that the work was being paid for by the worshipers. Most of the churches seized by the government were being returned. In front of the church and in the foyer were several afflicted people and some simple beggars, and although no one seems to have much money, they give them their alms.

I asked Helen how she came to be Orthodox, since most young people had been educated to be nonbelievers, as were her parents. At first she said she started reading the Bible. I quizzed her further, asking if she merely stumbled onto a Bible one day and starting reading it. Then she said, "As a young child I used to visit my granny who lives at the foot of the Urals, and one time when my parents were not there, my granny had me secretly baptized. Now I go because it makes me feel lucky."

With the former president of Crimea no longer in office (the office abolished), the government is being run by Anatoly Frantchuk, the premier, appointed by the president of Ukraine, Leonid Kutchma. This will be the status quo until the Crimean parliament writes a new constitution that conforms with Ukrainian law. I had an appointment with the vice-premier, Igor V. Ivanchenko, to ask about these matters. Helen, although in her early 20's, could pass for 16. She led me to the big government building where the interview was to take place, the door being manned by guards with automatic weapons. She whispered, "Don't say anything, just walk past." I was beginning to feel like I was part of a Peter Sellers movie. She did not want to get mixed up in the inevitable paper and document shuffle. Sure enough, we sailed on past.

Subsequently we were led into a huge office and I was introduced to the affable vice-premier. I think he was amused at the youth of my interpreter and remarked that he had a daughter her age studying in Germany. On the question of the Crimean constitution, he admitted that it had been written in haste and that changes had been necessary between 1992 and 1995. He explained that the Ukrainian constitution was the old Soviet constitution, and that Ukraine was not then a federated state. Only the Soviet Union had such a document. If there had been a constitution suitable for a federated state, many of the conflicts between Crimea and Ukraine might have been avoided. He said the majority of the Crimeans had not wanted to be a part of the Ukraine, but that the Russia government doesn't want it back, only the hardliners do. He said further that no serious politician talks of Crimea going back to Russia.

Many of the problems, he noted, come from the deported people. They came with nothing. When they sold what they had in Uzbekistan, inflation destroyed the value of their money. Other republics made promises about helping the deported, but at least Ukraine had delivered some, which is as much as it can. In the case of the Tartars, he says some help comes from Turkey, and all the deported get some money from the United Nations.

On the economic front, he noted that large reserves of gas had been discovered, one well being brought in with the help of a British company, JKK Oil & Gas, with credits from the European Banks of Reconstruction and Development. Ship building in Kerch is very strong, with orders for cargo vessels that carry them to the end of the century, especially Greek orders. Earlier, he said, privatization was blocked by the Crimean government, but this is changing. Hotels will be auctioned off, and foreigners can participate, but there is a problem with foreigners owning the actual land under current law. That will have to change, he said, and there is no question that foreign tourism is hurt very much by the lack of foreign investment.

Outside and across the government plaza, preparations were being made to celebrate the day of Ukrainian independence. In years past the yellow and blue Ukrainian flag had been burned, but for the time being, this was changing too. Nearby, I stopped to watch the police keep watch over two groups of very loud, old people. They were all pensioners, but the Ukrainian group carried the Ukrainian flag while the Russian pensioners screamed at them, yelling "Down with the Ukrainian government." They screamed they were much better off under the Soviets and wanted to go back to the old way. Their pensions were inadequate. This War of the Old People is almost a daily occurrence.

It reminded me of the situation back in the States. Roosevelt-Johnsonian junk bonds were issued, and they were to be paid by another generation, always after the officeholders were gone. I remember my father telling me in the late 40's that he was going to do fine with the Social Security scheme, because in the beginning, everyone paid a pittance for the promise of future security. But, he said, you and the grandchildren will have to pay for it. The Russian pensioners, like our own elderly, want the old way to remain, no matter what. They have depended on it. In Russia in December, nearly all the votes for the resurging Communists came from the pensioners. When a couple of generations have sucked on the teats of the Super State for so long, there may not be a political force strong enough to wean them. The Behemoth may have to die first. My view may be too apocalyptic, but it is my sense that if the sainted congressional freshmen are rebuffed in the next election and power should return to the Democrats, for decades to come no smart politician will take the risk of listening to what his constituents *say* they want, but will fall back on the time-tested rule of promising something for nothing. It has stood the present White House demagogue in good stead.

I met some interesting people in the Crimea and wish them well. It is difficult for us from the semifree enterprise West to understand how almost a century of super-state socialism can shape the minds of the people. When the Soviet Union collapsed, most Westerners believed that without the police state, private enterprise would grow naturally. Mostly, though, the old politicians are still in place under other rubrics. More important, the people over 30 have never lived under an environment of free enterprise. Those who are hustling, which they must do to stay alive, are thwarted by the old rules of socialism, or worse, by the criminal gangs who never obeyed the rules anyway.

Where is the hope? The main source is in the young people—those under 30, like Helen and Vova and Ireni, for they have seen the real teleology of Marxist theory. Helen explained to me that when her parents finished their technical training, they knew they had a job guaranteed. Her generation understands that it must be more flexible. Yet the young must pay the cartage for the old dispensation, which is very high indeed.

William Mills is a novelist and poet whose latest work of fiction is Properties of Blood *(University of Arkansas Press).*

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Letter From London

by Derrick Turner

The End of the East End?

Late one night recently, after pub closing time, I walked through the back streets of Whitechapel again, something I had not done for several years. The sight of the familiar streets and the old smells and sounds reminded me of the six months when I had lodged there, during which time I had grown to know the area intimately. From my window, I could clearly see the dim outline of Hawksmoor's 1714 masterpiece, Christchurch, all Portland Masonic solidity, one architect's homage to another. As the sun set, I would see its reflection in my open bedroom window, as though another Christchurch had materialized a little to the east, floating, riding serenely above the buffeting, increasingly Islamic streets carrying its secret freight of Huguenot, Hellenist aspirations. When it was dark, I would still be able to see its lit clock dial and hear its sonorous bells.

I was always struck by the contrast between this calm vision and the days that I spent in the heaving, thrumming Petticoat Lane and Brick Lane markets nearby, looking for old Everyman editions, carefully avoiding the piles of old shoes, broken teapots, electrical extension leads, polyester ties, and the matted-hair street-dwellers and their cider cans.

Christchurch was not the only calm, attractive image in Stepney—there were other outposts, strange small survivals—like the toothless Cockney woman, who would sit in the ancient armchair, oblivious to the polyglot noise, lost in reverie, perhaps thinking of nights of dancing to Joe Loss at the Empire. She would sit there below a St. George's flag that the young man managing the stall (her son?) had set defiantly flying above the mélange, her bandaged feet surrounded by damp-spotted 1930's textbooks on Elementary Chemistry, Concordances without covers, and recipe books showing smiling 1970's women with heavy mascara—the spent energy and accumulated capital of past generations—a never-ending line of books inscribed "*Ex Libris* Jonathan D.L. Peabody," "Presented by Old Hayworth Scripture Union, 14th. IX, 1897," or "To Louise from Granny with love, Christmas, 1975."

And there were even minor reclamations of lost territories, like Spitalfields Urban Farm—farm animals reclaiming at least a small part of vanished Middlesex. I particularly remember the tiny baby goats, digging their sharp hooves into me as they tried to suck my fingers, leaving long trails of nibbling, sweet saliva, rubbing their rough heads joyfully against my hand, and the scruffy pigeons, degraded descendants of escapees from medieval dovecotes, picking at spilt grain on the cobbles.

The rooster belonging to the man who kept hens across the road would wake me up every evocative morning, and I would look out across the golden-tinted roofscape and draw in my breath deeply in inchoate anticipation. The fine Huguenots' houses, of which Spitalfields has very many, all now being rescued and gentrified, added proportion and restrained beauty to even the worst streets and made you look up, to where racing clouds reminded you that the open spaces and fresh air of Essex were only an hour away, at the end of the District Line. If you looked in through the windows of one of these houses as you passed, you would see a pastel vision of perfect order, a perfect combination of function and form, from high skirting board to airy ceiling. All around you were the areas and streets whose names you have heard so often they are part of your folk-memory. Here in these frenetic, narrow, long-suffering streets were born the soldiers, sailors, workers, and empire-builders of Britain—and all this five minutes' walk away from the Square Mile, where the world's biggest companies' manicured employees sweltered in some of the most expensive office space in the world.

I would often walk for hours in the area between the Bethnal Green Road and Canary Wharf, along deserted streets of warehouses and old London County Council flats, legacies of the great philanthropic experiment begun by the Victorians, down narrow echoing alleys and churchyards become public parks, through a sad, secret country of empty, dirty streets and dark trees. I loved St. Dunstan's at Stepney, the manor given to the Bishops of London in 604, with its Saxon rood, 14th-century relief of the Annunciation and its inscribed stone from Carthage: "Time consumes all: it spareth none"—a motto that might well be an epitaph for the white Briton in this area, where now the brown Muslim is king. Parts of the area around Whitechapel are 90 to 95 percent Bengali. The street names are bilingual, the political parties sometimes do not even bother translating their campaign literature into English, and you can hear the drone of the muezzin all Saturday long. It is a little like being a Madrileno, looking down upon the thousands of campfires on the Campo del Moro—and you cannot help thinking how it may have been in Constantinople in 1452.

I remember walks in the middle of the night, across Commercial Street, where haggard prostitutes would eye me up hopefully, or hold furtive conversations through car windows with partly shadowed men, awful in the green and red lights from the car dashboard, along Winthrop Street, possibly the most derelict place in London, with its line of toppling corrugated iron fence and defenestrated buildings, and cobbles covered in motor oil. Perhaps Jack the Ripper might have walked, or run, along here, aghast at the enormity of himself, the wind picking up behind him, as behind me now making the fences creak and move, with blank-eyed Alsatian guard dogs throwing themselves fiercely against trembling back gates. I saw a scrawny fox along here once; we stopped dead, to stare at each other, and then he ducked through a hole in the crazy-leaning fence of a breaker's yard.

Toward Bethnal Green, I would turn and go under the dank bridge at Three Colts Corner, across the field where houses had been before Hitler's bombs, no sound but the rushing of wind in bramble and dockweed, shadowy horses looming up, and sneezing startlingly in the hot wind. Above the railway line, an avant-garde artist had erected a huge fiberglass pistol held in a huge fiberglass hand, pointing toward the city, a protest against high finance, but looking like a protest against and a threat to the whole civil Western world. Passing and repassing under the menacing gun, late-night, lozenge-lit trains from Liverpool Street full of relocated East Enders would rush by toward Essex as though escaping.

Derrick Turner is the editor of Right Now!, *published in London.*

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MEDIA

Myopic Media

by Marc Morano

The 1996 Radio and Television Correspondents Dinner in Washington, D.C., in March may be remembered for shock-jock Don Imus's tasteless diatribe, but the real discord occurred behind the scenes. Interviews I conducted with top news players at the dinner revealed a media sharply polarized. Network news titans clashed over the present state of the media.

The journalists in attendance had varied responses to *CBS News* reporter Bernard Goldberg's allegations of liberal bias in network news. In a March editorial in the *Wall Street Journal*, Mr. Goldberg criticized fellow CBS newsman Eric Engberg for "setting new standards for bias." Goldberg charged, "The old argument that the networks and other 'media' elites have a liberal bias is so blatantly true, it's hardly worth discussing anymore. . . . It comes naturally to most reporters."

Walter Cronkite was exceedingly agitated at the mere mention of Mr. Goldberg's name. He grumbled, "Oh Goldberg, for heavens sake." Mr. Cronkite, then apparently catching himself, abruptly changed his tone and sarcastically stated, "Goldberg's a marvelous fellow. I'm glad you quoted him." He then went on to agree with the basic premise of Goldberg's allegations. Mr. Cronkite explained, "He's got a point, but we've all made the same point before. Everybody knows that there is a liberal—that there is a heavy liberal persuasion among correspondents." He added that reporters are of the "liberal persuasion" because they begin their careers covering courts and police stations, that any reporter "brought up that way has to have a degree of humanity."

Lisa Myers of *NBC News* also agreed with Goldberg. She borrowed a page from Goldberg's analysis when she stated, "There is, I think, a bias within the media toward dealing with problems in a way that involves spending more money. . . . I think that there is a tendency among many [in the media] to feel that the best solution is a government solution. You may call that liberal."

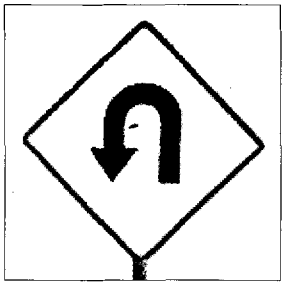
Mike Wallace of *CBS News* sharply disagreed, denying the existence of any liberal bias in the news media and using the election of recent Republican Presidents to prove it. According to him, the media could not be all-powerful and liberal because Republicans have been so successful at winning the White House. "When people suggest there is a bias in the media and we have all of this power and then of course the bias is always supposed to be liberal and not conservative. Under those circumstances, how many Democratic Presidents and how many Republican Presidents have there been beginning with Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan twice, George Bush. It's just in my estimation, it's almost a joke."

Mr. Wallace added, "I would defy you to know what . . . [Dan] Rather's politics or Walter Cronkite's politics [are] . . . " The challenge is easily met. Dan Rather at a May 27, 1993, CBS affiliates meeting told President Clinton, "If we could be one-hundredth as great as you and Hillary Rodham Clinton have been in the White House, we'd take it right now and walk away winners. . . . Tell Mrs. Clinton we respect her and we're pulling for her." Walter Cronkite recently advocated a new political system. He told *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, "We may have to find some marvelous middle ground between capitalism and communism."

Other journalists at the dinner were not happy with Goldberg's critique. Andrea Mitchell of *NBC News* stated, "I really disagree with that and I think Eric Engberg is a terrific correspondent." Judy Woodruff of *CNN* cautioned that, "I think Mr. Goldberg went a little bit too far." Bill Plante of *CBS News* was in no mood to discuss Mr. Goldberg's charges. He agonized, "My feelings of what Bernie did are too personal and too much connected to CBS to have shared [them]."

According to John Cochran of *ABC News*, Richard Nixon was justified in his distrust of reporters and may not have been the paranoid obsessed man the media portrayed him to be. Mr. Cochran stated that there was "an anti-Nixon bias.

LIBERAL ARTS



DIVORCING THE RACES

Black nationalist and Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan has come up with a final solution for America's racial problems. According to the South African *Mail & Guardian*'s February 2/8 issue, Farrakhan told Muammar Qaddafi that he dreamed of establishing an independent black homeland in Africa and populating it with the more than one million black convicts in American prisons. When asked if his proposal amounted to a call for segregation, Farrakhan remarked that "when two people are in disagreement in a marriage, they should first try to reconcile. When their differences are irreconcilable, the judge then will grant the petitioner a decree of divorce."

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I'm not even sure it was a liberal bias. . . . I think Nixon was somewhat right, it wasn't just paranoid. Sometimes people really are after you and sometimes that was the case with Richard Nixon."

The members of the fourth estate reacted with disbelief when confronted with a quotation from Bryant Gumbel of NBC's *Today* show. Mr. Gumbel called Pat Buchanan "Mr. Puke-anan" on the February 20 broadcast of *Today*. NBC anchorman Tom Brokaw said, "I didn't hear him say that. I mean I never heard him say that." Bill Plante had the same reaction: "Did he actually say that? I never heard him say it. Was it on the air?" Deborah Norville, former *Today* show coanchor, expressed shock at Mr. Gumbel's comment. Her face conveyed disbelief as she asked, "On the air?" She then added, "I don't think I want to comment." Dee Dee Myers of *CNBC*, formerly Clinton's spokesperson, was not surprised at all about Gumbel's reference to "Mr. Puke-anan." She stated, "I think reporters all the time say things similar to that. Not necessarily on the air but behind the candidates' back. . . . They don't have much respect for the people they cover." Al Roker, the weatherman of the *Today* show, would not address the question directly. Instead he stipulated, "I've never worked with a liberal anchorman. They're all very conservative." Presumably this would include Mr. Gumbel, who besides the "Puke-anan" reference once promoted an *NBC News* special on racial attitudes by stating, "This is not going to tell you whether or not you are a racist or a liberal."

The recent Harris survey that showed Americans to be increasingly distrustful of network news did not seem to concern the journalists. Bob Schieffer of *CBS News* shrugged it off and asked, "What's new about that?" Dan Rather put a positive spin on the lack of trust. He stated, "I think the American people are very smart . . . they're skeptical. That's the way they should be." Juan Williams of CNN explained that people don't trust the news anymore "because people see with their eyes and know that too often we angle stuff and have too much of an edge to it and aren't honest." Mike McCurry, President Clinton's press secretary, feigned shock that trust in the news is down. He asked, "You're kidding?! Surprise! Wake up! These guys need to understand that Americans want to understand what's going on in their lives."

The new novel *Blood Sport* by James B. Stewart on the Whitewater controversy was dismissed as old news. Tom Brokaw commented, "I don't think that there is any real big smoking guns or big explosions." Bill Plante lamented that, "The problem with the media coverage of Whitewater is it has been done over and over again." John Cochran suggested that Whitewater was not even an important story. He admitted that he had not read *Blood Sport*, but he was reading a "fascinating" book by Elizabeth Drew on the Republican Congress. He related that Ms. Drew's book "had nothing to do with gossip or Whitewater or what happened to Vince Foster or any of that. It has to do with what's happening with the issues of importance to the American people."

Bernard Goldberg's criticism had at least momentarily forced a myopic media to engage in a much needed self-examination. In today's newscasts, sensationalism has replaced sober analysis. The network news media and the political left in America share the same *modus operandi*. Both set out to identify a "crisis," exaggerate the extent of the "crisis," and then invariably point to a lack of government spending or regulation as the chief cause of the "crisis." As a result of this incestuous relationship, the mainstream press has virtually given a leftist bent to almost every issue. Liberal elected officials and advocacy groups have perpetually been able to look to the media as an extension of their public relations efforts. Whether it is the network news hyping the latest environmental "catastrophe" or sounding an alarm about GOP policies that they claim will result in "mean-spiritedness" or "starving children," the mainstream media and the national Democratic party are in lockstep. The orthodoxy of most of today's network news reporters does not allow them even to question the premise of government-sponsored "compassion." Unless the fourth estate is willing to heed critiques like the one put forth by Mr. Goldberg, network news trust and ratings will continue to decline. Talk radio and other alternative news and information sources will continue to prosper as network news becomes increasingly irrelevant.

Marc Morano, a freelance journalist, is a reporter for Rush Limbaugh, The Television Show.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Cuban Cash Cow

by Mario R. Sanchez

When the Cuban air force shot down two unarmed civilian planes, killing four men, there followed yet another round of senseless debate over how to handle Fidel Castro and his aging revolution. Cuban exiles renewed their call for vindication of still more deaths, while *Time* magazine ran Castro's justification of the "defensive" act. The Clinton administration condemned Cuba and sought the counsel (i.e., political support) of the self-proclaimed leaders of Cuban-Americans. The Republican hopeful(s) denounced the atrocity and assured a disbelieving public that Castro would not survive *their* administration. Congressmen of select districts clamored to condemn the inhumanity. The interested media pontificated while the disinterested media shifted the blame.

To promote the status quo, indisputable acts are endlessly disputed. There are those who justify the murders, for after all, the four dead men had in the past flown missions over Havana to drop leaflets; for the planes were "over" Cuban territory (wrong: they were in international airspace, one flying toward the United States and the other in a parallel course); for the dead were merely Cuban troublemakers (wrong: two were Americans, one with two tours of Vietnam as a U.S. Marine to his credit). There are those who ask rhetorically why the murdered "Cubans" did not go back to Cuba, though this is precisely what Cubans have been trying to do for the past 37 years. So endlessly we analyze acts of brutality until . . . the next act of brutality, when the debate begins anew.

And yet, how do we treat Castro today? Like visiting royalty. During his five-day visit to New York to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the United Nations, Castro received over 200 invitations beseeching his presence (not counting the invitations from those who wanted to kill him), lunched with the Council of For-

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eign Relations, met with legions of business tycoons, preached to a gathering of over 100 religious leaders, generated audience-pleasing diatribes at assorted churches and cafés, graced every major network's "news" programs with interviews (including a one-hour speech-a-thon with CNN), visited the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and *Time*, touted the editorials from five major newspapers supportive of his economic and political policies, and was the focus of every tabloid and journal in the capital of capitalism. Jeff Greenfield on *World News Sunday* said that "protestors gathered . . . to denounce alleged repression [in Cuba] because he [Castro] is a communist only 90 miles away." The implication was that if Castro were 9,000 miles away, or a Republican, but in both cases still a murderer, there wouldn't be protestors. The "alleged" is there solely to further delude the delusion.

Couldn't we simply ignore Castro, our de facto secretary of state to the south? Perhaps not, for his foreign and domestic policies have cost us many lives and untold billions. The Eisenhower administration in effect ignored the absconding of American capital and businesses in Cuba. The Kennedy administration gave us the Bay of Pigs and solved the Missile Crisis by releasing pictures and leaving missiles on the island. The Johnson administration accepted Cuban-exported revolution into Latin America, meeting the threat with billions in foreign aid, then cautiously taking credit for the hunting down of Ernesto Guevara, despite the fact that it was Castro who alerted the Bolivian army as to his whereabouts. The Nixon administration ineffectively thwarted Cuban expansion into Central America and Angola, again costing us lives and billions. And who can forget the Mariel boatlift, courtesy of the Carter administration? A humanitarian act no doubt, since Castro eliminated, at our expense, the overcrowding of his prisons and asylums for the criminally insane. The Reagan administration fought the communist threat by eliminating a heavy-bomber runway in Grenada and ignoring the same type of runways in Cuba. The Bush administration tolerated the drug trafficking by Cuba, placating the American public by pointing to the show trial of the Generals La-Guardia, despite the fact that drug trafficking by the Cuban government remains one of the biggest sources of revenue on the island.

Normalizing relations with Cuba, although popular with the media, is not imminent, as long as a protected sect stands to benefit from the present state of affairs. The Castro regime tortures and murders and exports revolution and drugs, but as long as money is being made under the status quo, the tortures and the murders and the exporting of revolution and drugs merit nothing more than lip service. Heaven help the reelection (or election) bid of anyone who seriously proposes dealing strongly with Castro, for this would mean harming the sugar, tobacco, tourist, produce, and profitable drug war industries. Could these politicians justify the thousands of unemployed drug enforcement personnel? Could they accept thousands of sugar, tobacco, and produce workers joining the ranks of the unemployed because the prices of these commodities had dropped? Could they tolerate the screaming by the airlines, which even under the Helms-Burton bill pays a fortune to Cuba for use of her airspace, but who would have to pay much more to fly around the island? Simply put, there is no financial incentive to remove Castro.

Could we negotiate with Castro? A better question is, why should Castro negotiate with us? After all, he gets what he wants right now. Both our trade and immigration policies regarding Cuba are directed by him. The embargo is a porous shell that enriches many and delivers what is deemed acceptable by the regime. Our conservative radio talk show hosts decry the abominations of Castro while lighting up yet another Cuban cigar, as if it matters that they were purchased overseas, as if that would make any difference to the thousands of individuals still rotting in Cuban prisons. One of the biggest trades in Miami is the sending of goods to Cuba, and since virtually all of the people performing these so-called humanitarian gestures are retired Cuban-Americans (the ones who claim to have lost everything in the exodus), they receive Social Security and Medicare/Medicaid benefits. They use the Social Security money to buy goods, shipping the products along with the free medicines and medical supplies provided at taxpayer expense to an embargoed Cuba. Visit any clinic in Miami, and one would swear an epidemic had struck the entire Cuban-American population of retirement age. In essence, the embargo enriches many and prohibits little, and therefore negotiations will be of questionable benefit to all. As with the War on Drugs, we have a knack for doing things quite ineffectively as far as the stated goals are concerned, but quite effectively in securing the unstated goals of financial and political rewards.

The mass held in Miami for the four men brought out a small group of family members, zealots, and the curious. The event itself was quite insensible and torpid, keeping in line with a Miami archdiocese desperately wanting to placate Castro. But what was startling was the expression of one of the mothers, who lost her son for no real reason. She exuded a despair, a condemning stare, not at any people or any government, but perhaps for believing that she had escaped the influence of a despot, only to find that she had not escaped at all. Like a bad dream, as lived by the solemn mother, the demented in Havana control those who are there as well as us here.

As the only solution to this problem, we should regain control of our foreign and domestic policies, and act purely for the benefit of our national interest. Our national interest includes equitable agreements with cooperating governments and humanitarian assistance when such assistance is used exclusively for humanitarian purposes. Our national interest entails fiscal soundness, which is not gained by maintaining artificially high prices on certain commodities and trade. Our national interest does not include the pursuit of folly at the expense of lives or massive foreign aid (read: tax dollars) or by draining local resources to the point of annihilation. Base our domestic and foreign policies on these sensible goals, and Castro and other despots like him will eventually fall.

Mario R. Sanchez is a graduate student at Florida International University.

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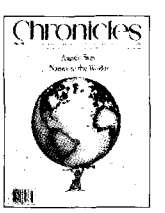

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EDUCATION

Refuge

by Peter Laurie

When still relatively small, I sang in a church choir whose quality was the envy of our whole capital city diocese, so that its members, who included a chorus of boy sopranos like myself, were recruited, auditioned, trained, and *paid*. This last feature helped reconcile to plain song and Palestrina my career army officer father who would have seen me in the Scouts, out on the diamond, or headed for West Point instead.

Two afternoons a week after school, I got what was still then an awkwardly attenuated leg up the step of a rusted bus at the edge of the boonies, rumbled across the rivulet into town, transferred, and stepped off at the jewel in pearl-grey English Gothic granite on its velvet lawn in my grandparents' genteel neighborhood. But there were also the Sundays at daybreak for preritual run-throughs, plus the Thursday evenings with the grown choir—not needing, evidently, our regimen of diction, intonation, vocalize, ear-training, sight-singing, and Latin. Nevertheless, a night of Thomas Tallis or Vaughan Williams might have been expected to prove a little intense, exhausting, for children, so at the right moment our truly masterful choirmaster would masterfully thank us for our grown-up efforts at music and deportment. Then we were, about 20 of us, and all but me in easy position to foot it on home under streetlights, joyfully—noisefully—dismissed.

Of course it all had a name, then. We called it The Christian Life. It appeared undetachable from what we also thought of as American life. We could not imagine *not* taking it for granted, hardly aware that we were becoming relics (so to speak) of its dissolving disappearance, relics with our own nonnegative-growth unpopulation-controlled offspring to try and raise as wholesomely as may be in an immoralist, if ecologically smug, war zone.

I was 30 when I came up from my design loft in the big city to be a pallbearer at my grandmother's funeral, the one who had helped me into the choir of happy memory that in turn had helped me lay the foundations of an artisanal, musical, literary, philosophical life. The church I had not seen since my voice changed had been refurbished in the manner of Episcopal Woodstock, Tudor altar cloths, damasks, silks, and tapestries whisked away and upstaged by psychedelic eyesores mocking the meditative majesty of lives of the saints in their harmonies of garnet and topaz leaded glass; our minister, now frail and venerable and white, actually going so far as to *ask permission*—out of deference to the deceased's term of service—to say the prayers a "last time the good old way." I, together with virtually everyone else there, a full house, as it were, mostly descendants of the founders of our obscure provincial capital that happened, on occasion, to have harbored a Washington Irving, a Herman Melville, a Henry James whose grandnieces went to school with my mother, had little trouble plopping the recently renovated travesty of a prayerbook back in its rack behind the pew, falling as one to our knees and making confession from indelible memory. A last time. The good old way. Even the psychedelic eyesores rippled with reverberant reverence.

It all came back to me at the gloomy end of the summer, as I threaded through the drizzle and the cobbled maze of Old Amsterdam paying belated homage to the wraith of my one Dutch friend, an old fellow teacher of Latin at what was once Melville's academy, a well-known resistor who on the way to the usual session in the galley of the usual yacht at the usual wharf on the usual evening became so overwhelmed with nausea he turned back home and missed the SS trap that meant torture and death to his fellows. It came back on the night train to Basel, the young Swiss matron with her half-Italian heritage from the isle of Capri commenting, "They try to make a big cookie of all Europe. Soon it will be all just crumbs!"

It came back as my succinct cab nosed up and down smooth stone lanes of Lausanne under pelting rains, through herds of beaded vehicles, at the moment of the commencement of a celebrated trade fair I knew nothing about. "Had I not come for the trade fair? Had I not even reserved a room? Was it not a sad end of summer?"

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I gave out what appears to have been a toney-sounding address on the high road to Bern, and felt the atmosphere mellow toward respectful deference in spite of my embarrassingly rusty French. My female cabby spoke well, beyond her vocation, and seemed the soul of Alpine composure now more or less flummoxed by an overturned truckload of demijohns and shards in the middle of a one-way, highly tilted alleyway called a thoroughfare.

It all came back as, late but stately, we pulled around onto the level entryway at last—emerald grounds, the panorama about to reveal itself from behind the parting storm, fruited trees in haze, a just-drained pool far off, the Château de Vennes, its mullioned windows, its escutcheoned doors, its neat ranks of roof slates slick still with barely abated downpour—and my chauffeuse (not one to feel outclassed, apparently) commented, "C*a fait très British*," though hardly a feature bespoke anything other than the French Swiss Alps but for one small sign that read, "The Erasmus Institute," *not* British, but American, where I had been invited to give a lecture. It was my first visit.

It came back, our lost good life, as I stood at ceremonious table, my host enunciating Grace, all my company crossing themselves and sitting down to an expert mountain meal, the glass of good wine, the American conversation punctuated by French, Italian, German, the ice cream cake dessert, the ring of radiant faces of offspring of large old-fashioned families, their evident delight in seemly dress, refreshingly couth speech, ease of good manners, their talk of treks and glaciers and Lake Geneva rowing clubs, concerts, art openings, the ideal length of a contemporary work of literature in light of the speed of modern life, the trip to Florence past, a coming trip to Rome, varied progress in getting beyond high school French, varied reactions to various ethical themes brought up in class, the snag in visa procurement.

It came back as I watched, conversed with, got to know my hosts, an exceptionally happy couple in middle years, marvelously adept at getting their charges to talk seriously of serious things in their virtual freshman year abroad, I myself almost regretting not having known them before, though I felt I had somehow always known them—both husband and wife out of Columbia, both of educator families, now with adolescents of their own to try and raise to resist the obtundities of popular culture and MTV, making their stand and offering refuge to a baker's dozen or so of almost-adults so unusual in being the offspring of whole families. One hopes they will survive this era to become the progenitors of whole families of their own. They are here because they want (or have parents who may be commended for *wanting* them to want) an introduction to the humanities as conceived not by Saint Lenin but Saint Augustine.

At one point my host mentioned the three theological virtues and averred that he felt a lifelong struggle over what he called the *necessity* of hope in a world so bereft of it, that one must have it before one can hope to give it. Perhaps it is not too much to say that what Dr. Michael and Mrs. Lynn Aeschliman principally *do*, after all, is create conditions for the incubation of hope. Their hospice, then, is actually an inn, an inn enclosing a school, a school enclosing an inn, offering Americans the haven of its enriching year between ideologically tainted high schools and ideologically tainted universities.

This really ought not to be necessary, of course, except that few, if any, of our schools are what they pretend to be, let alone what they *were* a mere three decades ago. One young woman, the eldest, as it happened, had had to be homeschooled by parents in protest against the unconstitutional business of so-called referrals, a euphemism for the obtrusion of psychological counseling into the rights of families to communicate their own values, those they actually live by, should they be other than collectivist, uniformitarian, other-directed, secular. Moreover, our present university graduates know conspicuously less about almost everything pertaining to human survival itself, let alone general culture, let alone civilities, than high school graduates did in my salad days. Yet because of their intense virtual indoctrination in what passes for The New Learning—*à la* "Condoms Forever! Vivisection Never!"—which has produced so far only fanatical hypocrisies and hypocritical fanaticisms, everyone appears to believe that no one ever knew so much since the world began.

Here Dr. Aeschliman's Erasmus Institute performs a public service, quite apart from an imparting by exemplum and exemplar of manners, morals, conversational aplomb, genuine apprecia-

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tion for the arts, intangibles once known as matters of soul, this by offering a traditional spread—discourse, history, literature, philosophy—in a classical Christian Augustinian spirit (a "wising up" rather than a "dumbing down") in the hope of producing, for those who may want and need it, *advanced standing* at just those "good" name schools whose standards have gone down for the count but whose pride in various radicalisms is notorious. Advanced standing may get one by the most obnoxious of the required courses in the introductory curriculum. Dr. Aeschliman radiates a sense of solidarity with the giants of the tradition he reveres—Augustine, Erasmus, Newman, among others, plus his own one-time personal mentor the late Malcolm Muggeridge. So many turn out to be far less than what they give themselves to be that I must bear witness to the Aeschlimans' classical Christian *modesty*, they and all their brood seeming not just capable, not just purposive, not just possessed of uncommon personal dignity, but *happy*.

In my five days among them, it only got better the better I got to know them: the blond quasi-princess who vacuums around all day is seeking refuge from the hell of Bosnia, once her home. A gentlemanly young man from northern Germany, here for mountains and international law, sits tea-times at the library Beckstein and plays Bach or Chopin with rare mastery. A couple in sales, here for the trade fair, *listens* with rare attention; likewise, a charmer of high school years from a lovely bilingual town on the edge of the Bierlersee seeks solace from the pain of divorcing parents. My student-neighbor on the hall is playing his viola rather well; two nice young women from Luzern are perfecting their English; and there are lively locals from the *Université Populaire* at the evening events and open lectures. All are relatively early to bed and sleeping soundly in the elevated air.

Then early up, into the van, off toward the long high wide valley actually *called* "le Vallais" and on toward the glacial source of the Rhône, stopping for sung high mass (the intonation true) at Sion cathedral, higher and higher into the high Anniviers, on foot at last, gazing into those endless albino Alps of Italy, mass and vastness of the Matterhorn so startlingly "there" and going nowhere, then down, down, afar the funny ridge-perched scalloped tower where Rilke spun his masterwork surrounded by what they call "La Noble Contrée," all its vineyards like terraced knitting come to fruition; and yet again beyond spreads that humped majesty of the Bernese Oberland wherein my host's father was born; back, past the site of "The Prisoner of Chillon" where Beethoven also conceived the so-called "Moonlight" Sonata, past the lakeside resort where Byron wrote the poem, through the neighborhood of the sanitarium where Eliot gave birth to "The Waste Land" within an afternoon's lakeside stroll of where Stravinsky composed "The Rite of Spring," then home to tea with the almost elderly English portrait painter, he the picture of all our lost high courtesies in the lost high manner of the English portrait, the talk slowly edging—through apt, rollicking mimicries of his old friend T.S. Eliot and his high English manner—back to the long war now a full half-century behind us, wherein our painter worked at Counterintelligence, to memories of my old friend the Dutch resister, to our host's telling of "the story."

At a point in Michael Aeschliman's New Hampshire boyhood, his Swiss-born father, a scholar of ordinary origins in the aforesaid Bernese Oberland, sat him down in his study and told him "the story." It seems that right in the midst of a memorable moment in modern history, the father, then a young man, found himself in the city of Berlin and therefore in chance attendance at what was to many in those days an enviable occasion, though none would admit so now: the public apparition of the high command of the Third Reich. All the apple-cheeked *Mädchen* with astounding figures were wrapped in dirndls, all the lederhosen'd Siegfrieds with amethyst eyes sporting too much stage makeup under blinding sweeps and kliegs, all the fatherlandish songs, fireworks, and orchestrated masses in hysteria. The fellow from the Bernese Oberland might well have felt a little daunted amid these reincarnate warrior giants out of the Nibelungenlieder, but all the manly Teutonic zest of all the singing had begun to tug at his heart and his own right arm seemed of itself to want to extend itself with so many other right arms and the chant, precise, deep-voiced, of "*Sieg, heil! Sieg, heil!*" over and over in heroic unison as the Führer himself and his entourage swept on by. Something, though—I'd like to think it might have been the wraith of Wilhelm Tell, the men of Uri resolved and ready with winnowing flail and pitchfork, the Rütli Oath, the Ranz des Veaux—held him back, a Swiss skepticism, a Swiss stubbornness, a Swiss neutrality. Anyway, it got him noticed.

> "I see," the challenge came from one nearby, "you did not do the salute. What gives, eh? You Red or something?" There appeared to be two of them, evidently drunk and sneering.
>
> "*Not* Red. I am Swiss."
>
> "Aha," came the ready reaction. "So, you are just a hill rube, then. The land of cows, yes?"
>
> "Yes. I *am* a rube. But even I am not so badly educated that I do not *know* when I have looked upon the face of the Prince of Darkness!"

This might have ended badly, but the giants were content with unmasking a religious nut and moved on, the true import of what was said fortunately lost on them. It was not lost on Michael Aeschliman, though, who continues to try and get the world to take seriously Baudelaire's overlooked remark on this crucial subject, as to how Satan's greatest achievement has lain in getting so many right-thinking sorts to assert so blithely that he does not even exist.

This has sped Michael Aeschliman, surely, all the way to his marvelous and necessary refuge. May now it not be lost on any of us.

Peter Laurie is a poet and scholar who lives in upstate New York.

LIBERAL ARTS

CRIME DOESN'T PAY?

"Young offenders are being paid up to £240 a year to buy themselves Christmas and birthday presents," reported the London *Weekly Telegraph* in March. "They are allowed to spend the money through mail-order catalogues, on supervised shopping trips or by holding parties in their secure accommodation. The money can be spent on clothes or training shoes but not items such as alcohol or cigarettes."

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Why Can't Catholicism Be Trendy?

It's stupid to fall for every passing fashion. But that's the story of liberal Catholicism since Vatican II. Remember the silly infatuation with the "secular city"? Who can forget the red-hot liberation theologians whose utopian dreams have turned to ash! The list of follies is long.

Now radical feminism is all the rage. And what are we getting? Rampant divorce. Wounded and neglected children. Abortion. Sexual confusion and gay lib. Attempts to rehabilitate fictional goddesses and reintroduce pagan priestesses. Mutilation of the English language. "Liberated" religious orders, which are now dying! And, not least, claims that Jesus committed the *sin of sexism* when He chose only males for His priesthood and that He was wrong when He taught us to call God our *Father*.

Of course, if Jesus committed an injustice in excluding women from the priesthood, then He could hardly be divine, and if He didn't have the authority to identify God as our Father, then He didn't come down from Heaven and wasn't a member of any Trinity. Bye-bye Christianity!

Liberal pick-and-choose Catholics are trendy types who crave the approval of the world and can't stand the thought of being Politically *In*correct. They're intellectual cowards — and imitators of the liberal *Protestants*, who long ago devised a smorgasbord religion in order to prove their "open-mindedness" and cozy up to the world. Very clever.

But what do liberal Protestants have to show for their efforts? *Dying churches!* Why? Because the result of liberal Protestantism has been, in the words of Flannery O'Connor, "to turn religion into poetry and therapy, to make truth vaguer and vaguer, to banish intellectual distinctions,...and gradually to come to believe that God has no power...cannot reveal himself to us...and that religion is our own sweet invention." So why bother to go to church anymore? Not so clever, after all! Trendy religion is not only counter-productive, it's just plain dumb.

Cardinal Newman said that "some authority there must be if there is a revelation given." Catholicism is a *revealed* religion, not a concocted one, and our Lord gave *authority* to St. Peter and his successor popes to guard that revelation from fads and delusions. The NEW OXFORD REVIEW, a Catholic monthly magazine with an international audience, is published in Berkeley — yes, *that* Berkeley — so we've seen fads and delusions galore. We know frauds when we see them. We stand with the Catholicism of the ages, the Magisterium, and the Pope. We articulate the full splendor of Catholic truth, and even help wimpy Catholics develop a backbone.

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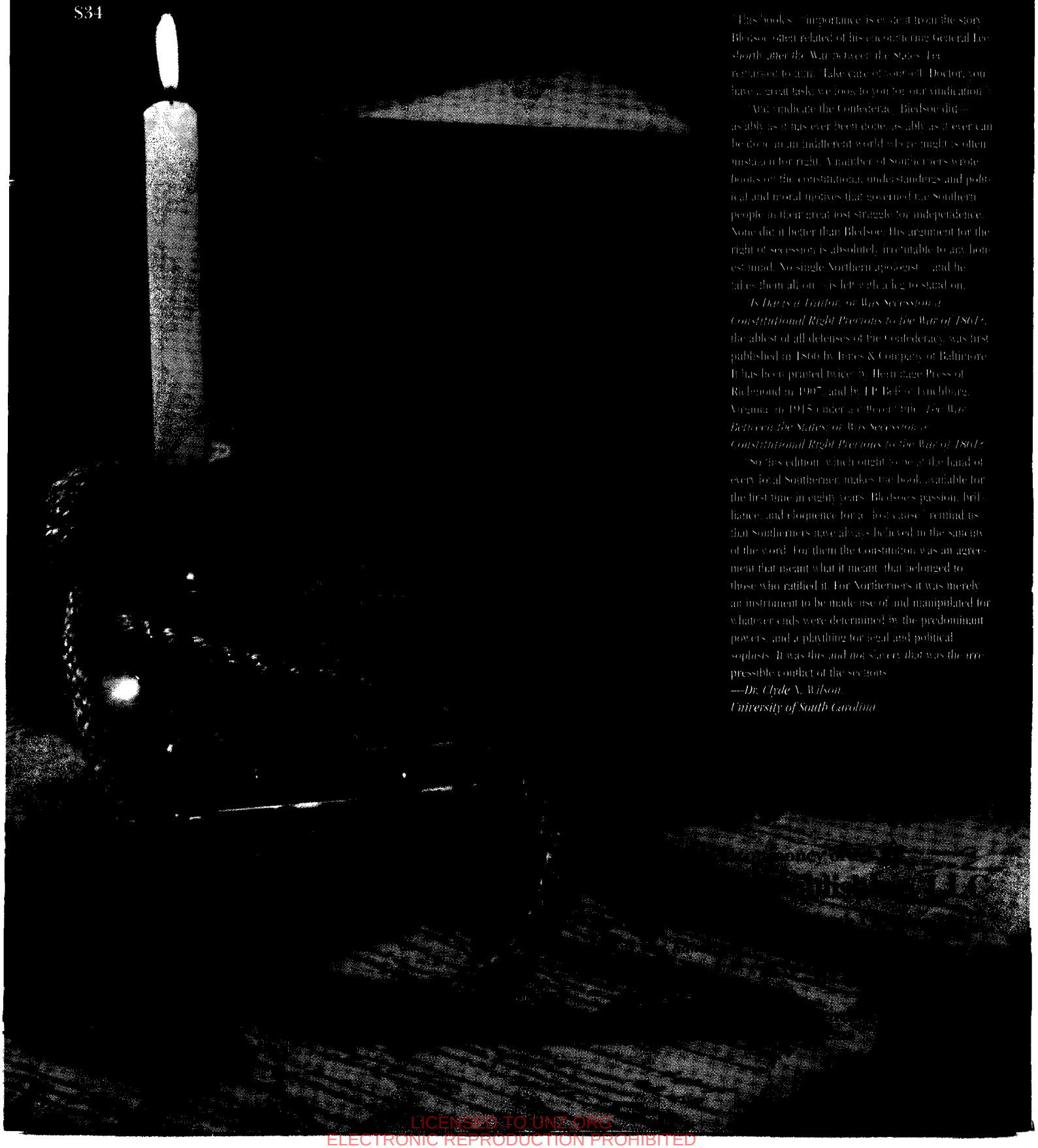

"His book's importance is no less than the story Bledsoe often related of his encountering General Lee *shortly after the War* between the States. Lee reportedly told him, 'Take care of yourself, Doctor, you have a great task; we look to you for our vindication.'

"And to vindicate the Confederacy, Bledsoe did it as ably as it has ever been done, as ably as it ever can be done in an indifferent world where might so often mistakes for right. A number of Southerners wrote books on the constitutional understandings and political and moral motives that governed the Southern people in their great lost struggle for independence. None did it better than Bledsoe. His argument for the right of secession is absolutely irrefutable to any honest mind. No single Northern apologist — and he salutes them all on — is left with a leg to stand on.

Is Davis a Traitor, or Was Secession a Constitutional Right Previous to the War of 1861?, the ablest of all defenses of the Confederacy, was first published in 1866 by Barnes & Company of Baltimore. It has been printed twice by Hermitage Press of Richmond in 1907 and by J.P. Bell Co. Lynchburg, Virginia in 1915 under a different title, *The War Between the States, or Was Secession a Constitutional Right Previous to the War of 1861?*

So this edition, which ought to be in the hand of every loyal Southerner, makes the book available for the first time in eighty years. Bledsoe's passion, brilliance, and eloquence for a "lost cause" remind us that Southerners have always believed in the sanctity of the word. For them the Constitution was an agreement that meant what it meant, that belonged to those who ratified it. For Northerners it was merely an instrument to be made use of and manipulated for whatever ends were determined by the predominant powers, and a plaything for legal and political sophists. It was this *and not* slavery that was the irrepressible conflict of the sections.

—Dr. Clyde N. Wilson
University of South Carolina

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